



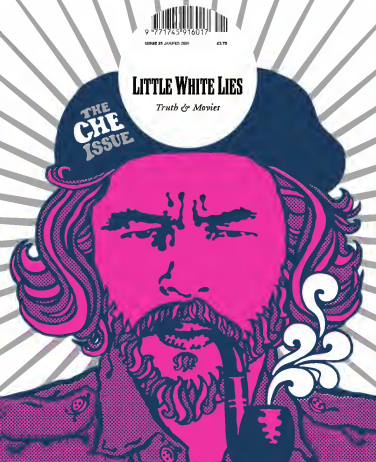
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LITTLE WHITE LIES

Truth & Movies

THE
CHE
ISSUE



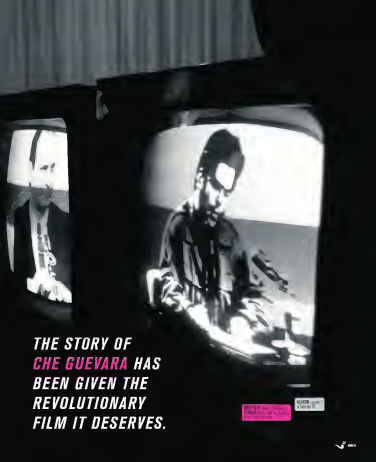


***“SHOOT,
COWARD.
YOU ARE ONLY
GOING TO
KILL A MAN.”***

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MAGAZINE

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*THE STORY OF
CHE GUEVARA HAS
BEEN GIVEN THE
REVOLUTIONARY
FILM IT DESERVES.*

SEE IT FIRST! **THE STORY OF
CHE GUEVARA** **ON DVD**
10/10/06

SEE IT FIRST!
10/10/06



***“SOULFUL,
GRIPPING
AND BOLD,
SODERBERGH’S
FILM EMERGES
AS ONE OF THE
STRANGEST
PROPOSITIONS
VIEWERS HAVE
HAD TO GRAPPLE
WITH IN YEARS.”***

Every so often they come along. Abel Gance's *Napoleon*. Jacques Rivette's *Out 1*. Spike Jonze's *Heavenly Creatures*. Big movies in every sense like sprawling over more than four hours and two dialectical casts (formerly *The Argentine* and *Guerrilla*, now simply *Che: Part One* and *Che: Part Two*). Steven Soderbergh's revolutionary character about Argentine icon Ernesto "Che" Guevara is something else altogether. Something rare, something elusive and something that has to be experienced.

For starters, it's impossible to think of any Hollywood director other than Soderbergh who could follow up a star-fucking ramp like *Gladiator* with a \$46 million, four-hour-plus Spanish language epic about an unrelatable Marxist icon.

Talk about a staggeringly uncommercial oddity—and *Che* is one that will continue to offer up surprises, frustrations and frustrations. But whatever it is, *Che* is certainly riveting. Soulful, gripping and recklessly bold, Soderbergh's film also emerges as one of the strangest propositions viewers have had to grapple with in years: an epic-set epic that lets us live with its subject for hours while never attempting to burrow under his psychological skin.

Distant, passive and wheezing from asthma, Director Del Toro provides not only an uncanny likeness of Che, but a supremely composed performance that remains impenetrably charismatic and organic. Warmth, crackle, wit and intelligence: it's all there. But Del Toro and Soderbergh constantly dodge attempts to define Che—either as a hero or a tyrant. Soderbergh's film drags off any hyperbole and grandstanding. Soderbergh masterfully charts Che's story and depicts his personal life almost entirely as it traces his triumphant rebellion in Cuba and his disastrous attempt to pull the same trick in Bolivia. ▶

Despite its gauzy, romanticized nature, *Che* tells us nothing about his background as a doctor, an intellectual or a father of five children. The early Motorcycle Diaries of Walter Sotillo (2004 film) never appear. Nor does the 1961 Cuban missile crisis. Or his mysterious schism from 'comrades' and confidant, Fidel Castro (another terrific embodiment by Demian Bichir).

Instead, this extraordinary portrait of the doctor-holdier-politician who became the T-shirt of the century is told through sad silences and forceful poetic scenes. Part factual reconstruction, part naturalistic experiment, *Che* is

full of compelling contradictions: persistently detailed yet deliberately simplified, thrillingly ironic but with an underbelly of beautiful but bloody agony yet innocence.

In a remarkable move, Soderbergh has attempted to offer us *Che* through a kind of cinematic masochism, showing us the both, life and death of a revolution rather than a revolutionary. Watching Guevara through Soderbergh is close but distant love: we get a vision of a poetic tactician and pacifist warrior who makes fatal mistakes that lead to his end.

The two parts of *Che* are mirror images: the first showing us the triumph



of a man inspiring a successful revolution, the second the doomed spirit of that man lost in fighting a failed one. Stitched together through jagged flashbacks, *Che* Part One skips through the '60s and between Che's early battlegrounds: the streets, the political arena and the jungle. After plotting a revolution with Cuban exile Gasto Quervin goes guerrilla, leading a tiny insurgency against dictator Fulgencio Batista from the mountain jungles of the Sierra Maestra. Though Soderbergh never cuts Che's son to the New York concert circuit as a speech-giving Cuban government minister, it's

this extraordinary victory, which changed Latin American politics forever, that becomes the focus of Che's opening half.

Brilliantly shot using a new lightweight digital camera, the first combat film unfolds with effortless mastery: bold, humorous intelligence and excitement. But it's less a battle than a military procedural: mixing, visceral, beautiful and dangerous. After the battle of Santa Clara on the last day of 1958, Che's extraordinary nous and astonishing daring cause the Batista government to crumble, blazing a path for a new communist era. ▶





Then... We jump time, picking up the story 10 years later, totally skipping Che's brutal role in Castro's dictatorship where he persuaded over hundreds of post-revolution executives. Instead, *Part One* spins into *Part Two*. Everything that worked for Che in Cuba falls apart when he tries to spark the same revolutionary spark. Setting up a Cuban-funded guerrilla camp deep in the hostile Bolivian jungle. Guevara leads another squad, embattled group of revolutionaries into a disastrous campaign. Instead of cheering on Che's revolution, the locals reject it. Instead of recruiting new soldiers, Che's beleaguered force starts fading away as his men are killed, attack down by fires or simply disappear.

Shot on the shoulder without flashbacks or fractures, it becomes a kind of psychological horror movie. Soderbergh shows Che a world around him until he's trapped alone in a gritty, exhuming woodshed. The thrilling jungle shoot-outs of *Part One* are replaced by choked sprints for survival, seemingly unfolding in agonizing real time. (It's also worth mentioning a minor misstep in the shape of Matt Damon here, which ruins the film's remarkable sensory bubble with an all-too-recognizable cameo.)

Yet still, the big issue is Soderbergh's flat-out resistance to boring into Che's psyche. There's clearly a frustration in the film's cagey manner and its unwillingness to paint a full portrait. This, though, remains Soderbergh's point. Wiles of Che's character — his bravery, intelligence, blindness, self-righteousness and humanity — are absorbed almost sub-consciously,

not through his words, but through his actions. Che's story somehow becomes bigger than politics or autobiography, finally achieving something more universal than ideological. Shot in close-up for the first time and then — startlingly — in first person, Guevara's dead-hoarse moans for a strange and profound closure.

All of which is more than anything, even Soderbergh has shown us before. More than any American director has for years. Is it a great film? We'll say yes. And as with all great movies, as flaws are vital parts of its fascination. One thing's for certain, whether it's a madman on guerrilla warfare, on Che or on movie-making itself, you've seen nothing like it before and are unlikely to ever again. **Jonathan Craddock**

Antipasto: The excitement has been building for months, though counter-buzz at Cannes suggested that the film was a textbook without personal project. **D**

Supper: Its telling not happening as it is told not brilliant. **D**

In retrospect: Like the look and feel of a personal film. And with my domestic backdrop I may take years to stomach fully. **D**

Movie: all-around smart as a 1970s jazz. And it's been better than I thought on Che's own life and people who go through such things. I take on the trouble in the jungle.

**IF *CHE* HAS
STOKED THE FIRE
OF REVOLUTION IN
YOUR BELLY, YOU
MIGHT WANT TO
TRACK DOWN ONE
OF THESE FILMS
TO KEEP THE
FLAME BURNING...**



SOY CUBA (1964)



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I think that a man should not live beyond
the age when he begins to deteriorate, when
the time has passed the highest moment
of his life has weakened.

Fidel Castro



IMIDER:

What do you love about movies?

Steven Soderbergh:

It's an immersion that I think is unique.

In the summer of 1975, I was 12 and I saw *Jaws*. It freaked me out so completely it was almost like a civil alarm court: 'I need to know more about who did this to me.' A year later, I got my hands on a camera. And the question was then, 'Well, can I do this to people?' And that's been the question

I've been answering in one form or another
for the next 32 years.

Benicio Del Toro:

The music. (Very, very long pause) The music is everything. The rhythm. The rhythm. What is it I love about it...? (Pause) I think that... (Pause) (Sigh) It might be too much to say, but I think you need to take the first thing I said. (Gets up to leave) The thing is, people might read that and go, 'He liked the music of *One?* What did he say?' (Pause) What is it I love about movies? (Pause) Give me a second, and you can decide what to use. (Pause) I like movies... Movies can... I like the idea that they can tell a story... I like the fact that... It's all the arts mixed in together, and it works. (Long pause) It's democratic.



Humor, personality and wit



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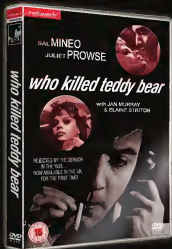
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VISIONS OF CHE

The belief was simple: create and help L&L celebrate in a party for our twentieth issue, but only if you show your own version of «Che» power on the menu. The results ran from the sublime to the ridiculous to the downright disturbing. We pressed to run the best ones in the mag. *Repe .*

Like 1. Simon Swamy **3.** Gareth Wright **5.** Gavin Brightman **6.** John Spence
7. Tiffany Pritchard **8.** David Post **9.** Sean Adity **10.** Philip Greenwood
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CHAPTER THREE
IN WHICH WE DISCUSS

Thomas of Marmontown, Indiana



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LORD!
LORD!
LORD!





**BENICIO DEL
TORO TALKS
EXCLUSIVELY TO
LWLIES ABOUT
CHE GUEVARA,
AMERICAN
TERRORISM
AND THE ALL-
IMPORTANT
DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN CRAZY
AND 'CRAZY'
CRAZY. WORDS
BY MIKE BRETT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
SAM CHRISTMAS**

Despite having a cap pulled over his eyes and a sitting posture bordering on the invertebrate, Benicio Del Toro studies every tendril. Not for his Hollywood's trademark mélange of subdued compassion and lingering insecurity, when asked for his opinion of the real-life character behind his leading role in *Che*, the actor leans forward, palms open, and delivers his thoughts with the conviction of a man dispensing self-evident truths.

"I think he's just like Jesus, except for one thing. I don't turn the other cheek. Look. You slap me, I'm gonna slap you back. You hit me, I hit you." Whether poured free from the hypnotic modulations of Del Toro or penneased slow for long enough to digest his views, and one thing is clear: whether you give it a big 'p' or not, his portrayal of Che Guevara in *Steven Soderbergh's* revolutionary diptych is so definitively political as to be enduringly cinematic.

Whenever the two films *Awake*, Del Toro inhabits the body and mind of his subject completely, assembling the thinking behind Che as a revolutionary not as fully as his physical maneuvers. Unsurprisingly, when his achievement was rewarded with the Best Actor award at Cannes this year, Del Toro dedicated it unflinchingly to "the man himself, Che Guevara." ▶

"I THINK HE'S JUST LIKE JESUS, EXCEPT FOR ONE THING: 'I DON'T TURN THE OTHER CHEEK, JACK. YOU SLAP ME, I'M GUNNA SLAP YOU BACK. YOU KILL ME, I KILL YOU.'"

Make no mistake: Del Toro's central performance is as swashy as it is pained — perhaps even messianic because of its polarization. In fact, so complete is the actor's immersion into Che's point of view — and so empathetic was the revolutionary's final outlook on life — that rejecting moral relativism into the role would be about as appropriate as opening a branch of McDonald's in Havana.



There is certainly no room in Del Toro's interpretation for any doubt, guilt, or any conclusion other than that the righteousness of Guevara's cause justifies any and all of his actions. "Well, guess, Che is pretty easy to understand," the actor argues. "Che is a guy who fought for justice. Anyone who's ever been a kid, anyone who's ever had a superhero — Batman, Superman, Spiderman — would understand that."

Del Toro's comic-book analogy is a telling one. In its own way, Guevara's world view shares a darkly naive likeness to George W. Bush's: if you're not with us, you're against us; doctrine, and has been a source of endless controversy for those who find themselves on the sliding lines of the argument. While many would Che

as a champion of the Latin American people, others vilify him as a war criminal responsible for the death of dozens — if not hundreds — of Cubans in Guevara's postrevolutionary purge of undesirables. For Del Toro, such doubts couldn't be further from the spirit of the revolution. "That thing about love [Che's claim that 'revolution is love'], I believe it. I believe that it was about love — about love towards humanity [I] say this to anyone — because I really read his *Grassroots* Guevara — Che never touched anybody. When he took prisoners, he never mistreated them. He let them go. That's not really in the movie, but it is in the diary."

As ever, the distinction between terror and reasonable force is one drawn in the minds of the combatants themselves; or, in this case, of those in front of the camera. Del Toro certainly has no illusions that Guevara was a pacifist, but he flashes his pistol in a gesture of mitigation when asked to explain his character's insistence on violence as a means of revolution. "He fought the army. He agitated — he's not a he anarchist — was directed towards not. He had a gun that fought the gun. He didn't fight the flower!" He pauses for a moment, then lets rip a blend of poetry and politics of which Che himself might have been proud. "That last song in the first movie, it's a Silvio Rodríguez song. Silvio Rodríguez is like the Bob Dylan of Cuba,

and that song is called 'Fue el Contrío Fue el Wepeo Versus Wepeo.' That, in a way, is Che. He fought the rifle that kept people down."

For all Del Toro's eloquence and charisma, it is impossible to ignore the heavy irony hanging over our conversation: whether or not we outperform our admiration of Che is misplaced, it is impossible to believe that a film so contradictory to the political interests of the country in which it was produced could have come out of Guevara's postrevolutionary Cuba. Del Toro inadvertently launched the argument when he exclaims "Thank God that in America — despite all the madness — this movie can be an incredible example of freedom of press, of freedom of expression. We are all Americans who did this movie. I mean, [in Puerto Rican, but I was made to be an actor in America. I never did any acting in Puerto Rico or anything like that. So I consider what I did in that movie as a product of what I learned in America, in a way."

"Che Guevara's revolutionary lens made in America. It's not the slogan you would expect to find emblazoned under Alberto Korda's iconic image, but such delicious contradictions help explain why the United States has launched in the years since Guevara's death when much of the most defining vision for a free Cuba seems to have passed away with him. At the start of Che: Part One, Guevara (Bach) as Castro role ▶





"THE CUBAN REVOLUTION IS A GREAT IDEA, BUT IT'S HAD ITS MISHAPS. COMPLETE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS HASN'T REALLY HAPPENED - CHE DIED BEFORE THAT COULD BECOME A REALITY."

against General Batista's pre-revolutionary regime, under which citizens suffer appalling inadequacies in their health and education systems, and live in fear of repressing their political views lest they be "killed to silence them". Under Castro, the Cuban education and healthcare systems have improved immensely as a direct result of state intervention and management, but freedom of speech? When pressed on the subject, Del Toro seems more willing to talk about Cuba than Che's role in forging the country's political direction: "I think the Cuban revolution is a great idea, but it's had its mishaps, and I think one of those mishaps is that the complete freedom of the press hasn't really happened - and Che died before that could become a reality," he argues. "Then again, you also need to understand that they [the Cubans] have been under hostility from the strongest country in the world, that is only a spit away from them, for almost 60 years. That person creates a lot of internal pressure, to the point that you have people thinking, 'My neighbour is a fascist' - like that song by Tom Waits, 'What's He Building in There?'"

The man's got a point. While the EU has adopted a policy of at least partial engagement with Cuba, the United States' aggressively isolationist policy has caused an almost complete rupture in relations between the two

near neighbours. In an atmosphere of mutual suspicion, some argue that conservative US administrations have turned a blind eye to the activities of anti-Castro activists in Miami, tacitly making the city a state-sanctioned safe haven for terrorists bent on damaging Cuban interests. "In Cuba, there have been acts of terrorism that we don't even know about," states Del Toro. "I learned when I was there that there was a Cuban terrorist, living in the United States, who blew up a whole plane - 160 people died. A whole airport team was inside the plane. The guy got arrested, America had the right to extradite him, and now he's waiting five in America. You can do your research on the guy."



Wary of getting bogged down in the political quagmire that surrounds Guevara's legacy, Del Toro turns to the emotional side of the project. "You can talk about politics and Cuba all day - and maybe I'm not the most qualified person to be talking about this stuff - but I'll tell you one thing: from doing this movie, I did learn a little bit more about the history of Cuba and the history of Latin America than I'd done before - and I am Latin American. That character drew me in."

Having firsthand met Castro here in Havana, Del Toro clearly feels that Che is a hero destined to inform the psyche of the country's people. "When we went to Cuba, and we met all the people that knew him, or knew we were working on the project, the feeling you got from the people towards Che was of such deep love. They were not set up - they were people I met by chance, and they were like, 'We love the man. The love was so intense, and so beautiful, in a way. There is a whole country down there in which Che is revered, and then it expands into Latin America, and into Europe, and it trickles into the States.'"

Such reverence perhaps marks the fact that Guevara followed a successful Cuban revolution with the altogether less illustrious Bolivian campaign - the subject of Che, Part Two - during which he met his gaseous demise. Says Del Toro, it was Steven Soderbergh - and I was completely in agreement with him - who said, 'I see show the guy going into Bolivia, saying he's going to take the government, and he's gonna change it - the guy's crazy.' In order to understand that he's not 'crazy, crazy,' we had to [use the first movie to] show who he was and that, if there was anyone who could do it, it was him." Whether or not Guevara could do it, perhaps the most pertinent moral question - the one that neither Del Toro nor his character ►

"LET'S BE SINCERE HERE. YOU CAN DO 10 MOVIES ABOUT CHE; THE GUY LIVED 10 LIVES. VERY FEW PEOPLE LEAVE THE IMPRESSION ON LIFE THAT HE DID, THAT STAMP."

seems to entertain at any point — is whether he should do it. Gans would argue that Che is not just 'romy' only, but borderline sociopathic in the way that he unflinchingly places unnamed peasants at the centre of a conflict about which they know nothing, and for which the majority are anything but willing to die. Does Gansata ever begin to grasp the consequences that he and his men's intervention had on the rural poor of Bolivia?

"Is he aware of that?" Del Toro muses. "Yes, he definitely is, but he's not going there, weapons and saving. There's the army, almost 'em! He's just saying, 'You give me some food, I'll pay you some money.' He's just treating them like any person would. I think that's a part of the revolution. For the peasant, the poverty is beyond anything that we can understand. They don't even understand it. The poor they're born like that, that's all they know. But Che knows. He's like you and me. He knows Pemolín. He knows that medicine does help, that if you take this drug, it will kill the pain, it will help your bones, it will help your system, you will live longer, you will be able to do more for your kids — all that stuff."

Ultimately, this is Del Toro's Che — a man so clear in his own mind about the rights and wrongs of society, that even the imposition of his beliefs on others must, by its very nature, be a form of benign dictatorship. "I mean, come on. Che was right," the actor continues. "It's been 40 years

since he died and nothing's changed. One of the only things that has changed is that in Bolivia right now there is an authentic Indian-born president — Evo Morales — who is actually for the people and for the people, and when he came to power, he gave a minute's silence for Che."

Moving gesture — one of silence — may have been the most fitting of all, given the vacillations and often incoherence of whether Del Toro plays in fact from the lips of both Che's detractors and his adherents. Despite having lived a complex life, he has been reduced in the public eye to an iconic figure so loaded with political baggage that it is equally pointless either to beauty or denature him.

Perhaps Del Toro has himself missed the secret to the sheer power of his central performance, too. Che is not compelling because of the purity of his ideology nor the righteousness of his cause. Our eyes are glued to him from the first frame of the film to the last because the sheer strength of his conviction, and the tenacity with which he defends it to the death — whether right or wrong — makes him an exceptional, and occasionally compelling, human being. As Del Toro suggests, "Let's be sincere here. You can do 10 movies about Che, the guy lived 10 lives. Very few people leave the impression on life that he did, that stamp." Better put it up and get the popcorn in — it sounds like Che puts down to 10 are on the way. ☺

"Del Toro is probably referring to the bombing of Cubana Flight 455 in October 1976, which was masterminded by Luis Posada Carriles — an anti-Castro activist with links to the CIA. Of the 73 passengers and crew that died, 24 of them had just represented the gold medal-winning Cuban boxing team at the Central American and Caribbean Championship. Carriles, having been tried in Venezuela for the crime and acquitted by a military court, was convicted by a civilian court, before escaping and making his way to Chile. After serving some eight years in jail there, he escaped and was extradited to the US, where he is now — following a protracted immigration trial — a free man, some three decades after the offence was committed.

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WE ARE TOLD THAT CHE GUEVARA IS A UNIVERSALLY IDOLISED SYMBOL OF FREEDOM BUT THIS DELIBERATELY OBSCURES THE FACT THAT CHE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DIVISIVE FIGURE. TO SOME, NOT LEAST THE COMMUNITY OF CURANS LIVING IN EXILE FROM THE CASTRO REGIME IN MIAMI, CHE IS A WAR CRIMINAL WHOSE DEATH WAS THE ONLY EXAMPLE OF THE MUCH-VAUNTED JUSTICE FOR WHICH HE CLAIMED TO STAND. WE ASKED OMAR LÓPEZ MONTENEGRO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA, TO PRESENT THE CASE FOR THE OTHER SIDE, WRITTEN BY OMAR LÓPEZ MONTENEGRO

Che is the myth that communism has portrayed through its years of existence, perhaps there is more accuracy and better reflects the true nature of this ideology than Che Guevara. Turned into a pop culture icon by the wonders of mass-culture merchants, the Che myth embodies all of what is wrong, criminal and untrue of communism. A failed guerrilla master, disastrous economist, imprisoned slaughterer and ruthless headliner. Ernesto Guevara de la Serna is the best testimony of what the ideology he dedicated his life to represents for Latin America and the world: limited and politically oriented education, intolerance, poverty, denial of human rights and death. Let's take a nice, panoramic look at the facts concerning the many facets of this man to end out the truth behind the myth.

Che was "Political Prisoner" In spite of the "Heroso Rebelación" movement, Che was a total disaster as a leader for guys to struggle. He wrote some articles and papers on the subject. (See *Guerrilla Warfare*, but never succeeded in applying any of the teachings he so vehemently preached in them. Heady due to his inability to understand the realities of the field and his absence of knowledge about practical principles of combat. The only successful guerrilla struggle he took part in was in

Cuba, in which he was to water and no drought at all. The Gorga campaign was a total disaster and the guerrillas were annihilated in a few days; the guerrilla started ended with the guerrillas almost massacred and one of his captains, Antonio Brenes Montaña killed, while his last attempt in Bolivia ended with his own death.

Che as Government The only resources left of his legacy as an economist are the papers he signed "Che" and the three dollar bill with his image issued by the Cuban government in the 80s, both of them already discontinued. During his term as the President of the Cuban National Bank, he caused the biggest inflation in Cuban history by issuing thousands of pesos without the corresponding support in gold. He was also the brain behind catastrophic experiments like the commune farms and the suppression of the use of money in trade transactions between Cuban factories, ministries or enterprises.

Che as Minister Perhaps nothing defines Che Guevara more than his particular vision of the world, expressed in *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, a letter, now by Carlos Guevara, editor of *Martín (Marte)*, a Uruguayan weekly magazine published on March 12, 1985. There he displayed

the key concepts of his revolutionary philosophy: despise of material thinking, violence against opponents and manipulation of the masses. The two following concepts from the letter are self-explanatory of these three pillars of Che's revolutionary ideas:

About materialists and materialism, he wrote "To sum up, the bulk of many of our advanced intellectuals lies in their original sin: they are not truly revolutionaries. We can try to gild the sin free so that it will bear pains, but at the same time we must plant pain trees. New generations will come that will be free of original sin."

Education, for him, was just a tool to manipulate the masses: "In our case, direct education occupies a much greater importance. The education is concerning because it is that no subterfuge is needed. It is carried on by the state's educational apparatus as a function of general technical and ideological education through such agencies as the Ministry of Education and the party's ideological apparatus. Education takes hold among the masses and the between new attitude tends to become a habit."

His vision of how to deal with political opponents were expressed in his *Manual for the Revolutionary Justice Work* in April 1987. This thought was considered so useful by the

regime that it is written on Cuban school's 12 cards. Stated as an element of struggle, unbecoming hatred for the enemy, which suffers a human being beyond his natural existence, turning him into an effective, violent, selective and cold blooded killing machine."

Che as a person This is definitely one aspect of Che Guevara's personality that has mostly been hidden from the public eye by the proponents of the myth and the merchants who profit from the paraphernalia. There are plenty of testimonies about his personal involvement in the revolutionary apparatus of the regime by being exiled in La Cabaña prison, many of them generously offered by him, and being part in others by being the coup de grace shot to executed prisoners. This most vivid example is the January 1997 question from *The Moscow Daily* describing how he shot Eusebio Guerra, a peasant who was a guide for the guerrillas under the impression expressed that he was an informant for Batista's army. "I ended the problem with a 32 calibre pistol in the right side of his brain... His belongings are now mine."

In order to know the truth behind Che Guevara it will be sufficient to merely look into what he wrote

and how he lived. The reality of people who dug T-shirts with his image have never read Che's own words. Neither do they have the slightest idea of what were his visions of the world. They have just heard or read what other people have written about Che, but not what he actually said or wrote. This is how the accident by the fact that the people who now abuse Che are the same people that he hated so much, described by him as enemies of the original sin: long-haired hippies, counterculture activists, and free thinkers. If by chance they would have been so unfortunate to have lived in Cuba when Che Guevara created the UMAP (Many Units to Support Production) concentration camps, they would have all been sent into forced labour.

The great irony is that because of the commercial frenzy around his figure, Che now symbolises more than anything else the current state of the current ideas he tried so valiantly to establish in his place and time. Communism is now a failed ideology that can only be used as a derivative role of false gods by a disbeliever in every place I was put into prison. For Guevara even guerrilla adventures theory has an respectable way of burying things in their real perspective. ☐

CONSUMING CHE

PAUL BUHLE, SENIOR LECTURER IN HISTORY AND AMERICAN CIVILIZATION AT BROWN UNIVERSITY, CONSIDERS HOW THE EXPLOITATION OF CHE GUEVARA'S IMAGE AFFECTS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF A REVOLUTIONARY ICON TURNED FASHION ACCESSORY. WORDS BY PAUL BUHLE. IMAGES FROM SPAIN RODRIGUEZ'S CHE: A GRAPHIC BIOGRAPHY

Ernesto "Che" Guevara's image is everywhere. It adorns billboards in Cuba, t-shirts in Italy, posters in Vietnam, record sleeves in the United States, cigarette packaging in Peru, and, most of all, T-shirts throughout the world. Images of Che fill museums and inspire films, while contemporary celebrities have treated personas to resemble the iconic Che. Although Che Guevara died in 1967 at the age of 39, his image lives on. Every crisis of US empire, linked in particular to radical claims in Latin America, seems to require his symbolic presence.

What does Che the image have to do with Che the person — anything or everything? A look back at how Che's image has been

used, both as a concrete example of revolution and a vague symbol of rebellion, can shed light on who he was.

Images chronicle Che's life and shape his legacy. Photographs document his childhood in Argentina, his youthful travels through Latin America, his participation in the Cuban revolution, his speech at the UN in 1964, and his fatal guerrilla activity in Bolivia. But although many photographs of Che exist, one in particular helped spread his fame around the world. In 1960, Alfredo Diaz Guillermo (Korda), a former fashion photographer working for Fidel Castro, spontaneously snapped two frames of Che during the March 1960 mass funeral for the 80 ▶



I KEEP SEEING THIS
GUY'S FACE EVERYWHERE!

YOU MEAN ERNESTO
'CHE' GUEVARA?

THE ASSASSIN STEPPED INTO THE DINGY SHED. CHE KNEW HIS LIFE WAS AT AN END. THE KILLER HESITATED.



victim of the La Coubre freighter explosion in Havana. Korda captured his angry stare along with his beard, leather jacket and long hair. The photograph has come to symbolize Che. It may portray him, as widely claimed, the single most reproduced photograph of all time. Certainly, it is among the most recognizable of the twentieth century.

After a fall in the late 1970s and 1980s amid the apparent exhaustion of the revolutionary mood, Che's image is as ubiquitous today as in the years after his death. The combination of a 1980s fascination with all things '60s and the rise of the political message T-shirt led to a resurgence in Che imagery. But while his image still adorns dorm rooms and community murals, its presence on assorted consumer goods suggests its increased commodification, decontextualization and incorporation into celebrity culture. Many who see the image or wear the T-shirt don't know who Che was or what he did. Yet some still consider him a hero and a powerful role, and the continued controversy surrounding Che's life as a revolutionary suggests that his image has not lost all meaning.

Che's increasingly commercialized image can now be found on key-chains, banners, cigarette packs, and even on the labels of alcoholic drinks. Cuban contemporary art critic Giselda Mosquera has decried the "complete consumer worship" of Che, while before his death in 2001, Korda lamented his successfully used Emmet vodka for using his image in an advertisement, saying, "As a supporter of the ideals for which Che Guevara died, I am not averse to its reproduction by those who seek to propagate his memory and the cause of social justice throughout the world, but I am categorically against the exploitation of Che's image for the promotion of products such as alcohol, or for any purpose that denigrates the reputation of Che."

Attempts to associate his image with these products indicate that Che is perceived as attractive to youth, different, cool. Yet while he may now be associated with vague notions of rebellion rather than concrete theories of socialism or warlike, his placement on products says as much about a consumer culture where nothing is off limits or sacrosanct as it does about Che's meaning.

Che's image long ago openly been subjected to the post-modern pastiche that now characterizes mass culture. It is juxtaposed with images of other political figures as celebrities in news, with cartoonists like Princess Diana, Che, Ronald Reagan, and Madonna all paraded before consumers that mimic Che. Artists create product-led images of Che wearing iPod headphones or a Nike sweatshirt or his beard, while Che gear abounds on the internet. A T-shirt from Budapest depicts Che with the face of Mike Zedden as a DJ spinning a record, while a New York Times cartoon portrays him wearing a Star Glasses T-shirt. These products commodify Che, who is absorbed into the apathetic consumerist life to which he stood in revolutionary, sometimes oppositional. Yet they also deliberately play on the story of his presence on consumer

SHOOT, COWARD. YOU ARE ONLY KILLING A MAN.



products, something that hints at a tacit recognition of the divergence between his own values and how his image is used.

Despite all this, Che is still viewed and represented as an idealized figure around the world. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Bolivian President Evo Morales and other left-wing political leaders in Latin America echo Che's outspoken stance against US imperialism, and promote his image as a symbol of their Bolivarian mission. In the United States and England, two separate exhibitions of Che imagery in the last decade have shown the continued prevalence and relevance of his image. David Kordell argues that the ubiquitous variety of Che images ensures their continued significance, while curator Tzveti Ziff maintains that the image's sheer staying power suggests that it has significance even for those who know little about Che himself. In 2007, countries around the world commemorated the fortieth anniversary of Che's death. Celebrations attended by Latin American heads of state, pilgrimages to the site of Che's death, and obituary editorials in newspapers from Zimbabwe to Che's all attest to the continuing impact of Che's legacy.

Controversy surrounding both Che and his image continues, with no end in sight. Former New Left-turned-liberalist critic Paul Breman attacked the depiction of the young Che in Walter Salles' 2004 film *The Motorcycle Diaries*, arguing that it contributed to a larger trend that obscured Che's brutality and recklessness. In October 2006, the *San Antonio Express-News* ran a story about a city employee who was rebuffed for wearing a T-shirt with a picture of Che while riding her bike to work, even when the T-shirt turned out to be part of a fundraiser for a local radio station. The radio station's program director replied, "We won't be taking a side on whether [Breman] was a villain or a hero. We were just playing up the angle of 'revolutionary outfit.'" We weren't trying to make a political statement." And at the center of controversy around Che's life, use of the image has increasingly been defended as meaningless and harmless in order to justify its continued commercial exploitation.

Attempts to assign meaning to Che iconography today are eased by underestimating its varied use in the past. Just as groups in the New Left, Latino communities and Black Power movement used Che's image in diverse ways during the 60s and '70s, his image today is likewise considered both powerfully resonant and empty of meaning. That familiar photograph of Che now says as much about revolutionary movements in the past as it does about our current pervasively celebrity culture. But as Spivey Rodriguez's powerful artwork depicts, and understating Che's life and the development of his image are the first steps towards reclaiming its power to harness the transformative social forces at work around the globe today. ☐

This essay is an edited extract from Paul Salles and Brenda Berkman's interview, *Che's Case: Image and Ideology in Che*. A Graphic Biography by Spivey Rodriguez, published by Verso.

FROM THE ACCLAIMED DIRECTOR OF **THIS IS ENGLAND**



SOMERS TOWN

A film by Shane Meadows



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OWN IT ON  AND  JANUARY 12

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ELITE SQUAD

ON THE STREETS OF RIO
ONLY THE ELITE SURVIVE.



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GUERRILLA

SELLING (OUT) THE REVOLUTION

MARKETING



WIM WENDERS



FROM RADICAL POLITICS
TO REBEL FASHION: THESE
ARE THE FILMS THAT ANY
WOULD-BE REVOLUTIONARY
SIMPLY CAN'T AFFORD TO
(BE SEEN TO) BE WITHOUT.
WRITTEN BY MARTIN LEE GARDNER
AND PAUL FERGUSON

They are tales of struggle, rich pageants of human endeavor set to the machine-gun rhythm of revolutionary fervor. Which is to say, they are a universal yet routinely misunderstood link. Exports with which to bamboozle one's under-informed (dis)advantaged at the student union bar. More importantly, they serve as a passport into the big, busy world of otherwise wildly enigmatic foreign exchange students.

They are that committed band of cloistered brothers who, through a mixture of bold political vision, occasional wit, and ready recourse to go-faced dogmas, open ear eyes to the possibility of change, the glory of institutions and the wearisome thrills of hanging around in ozone shaded toilet an assault rifle.

The battle of Algers is off very well, but when it comes to a shooting war look no further than *Giù l'Inferno* or *The Battle of Algers* (1955) for tips on armed men and the lowdown on how the pre-existing boxes of material will bring their best to the event. The film was made only a few years after the real-life clash between French forces and the Algerian FLN, while *France* was at war in a new box set. Taking a cue from Roberto Rossellini's template for gas into *Smoking, Rome, Open City* (1946), *Partenope* opens that film's documentary style up inconspicuously. *Il Gambero* was one of the bubble films and your own.

[illegible]

But even the good directors deserve a hit with more epic credentials than *Beauty*, and here Steven Soderbergh must have envied Richard Fleischer's good fortune in being able to cast wild-eyed gentling classmate Omar Sharif in his 1969 biopic *Casablanca*. Sharif must at first contend with Jack Palance in the role of Fidel Castro and in sparring script, but he is to battle his way through what are probably the trepidities of *Calmness* were society either that the steaming purges of Cuba. The cursed imperialist blockade had closed another society, cosmic world.

[illegible]

Either that, or it's a heightened rendition of their Socratic magnetic, dragged-up outtakes that were never than James got off over his nose, some hardened recitals that out words of impenetrable invective, while you eye your watch until you can slip out and install yourself in a dark corner of the theatre bar and look conflicted and dangerous over half a pint of subverted sustenance.

A somewhat more vibrant H&M still well-cuffed swarmed on camera from Hitler's valet, Michaelangelo Antonioni's dip into the Hollywood studio system, *Zelig* (PVO 1983). A hypocritically postfeminist parody on later-80s southern California campus politics, high desert orgies and explosive (in its decade well-filmed) sex became more precisely "sassy Pink Fluffy" readings, if I follow a couple of bread-bait, blow-dried non-actors through some heavy-handed metaphors. Again, it sounds like "a tip of the toilet" but the whole thing resembles nothing less than an *Arrested* perfume ad and has no actual evolutionary value beyond blagging creditlines to look better.

The old school list says of Lindsey Anderson a public school scoundrel: " (1965) bring things closer to home. Perpetual problem child Malcolm McDowell? may have turned into a man of a certain age or to the shaggy-haired lumber jacket with the open collar of student rebellion, but ... public schools? Really? Could it have peaked on something more identifiably street-level and immediate, like, say, the House of Lords, or the Museum?"

7 Years, now What about 10 Years ?

With the trappings of machismo as prevalent in these films, one could be forgiven for regarding that revolution as a logo-only affair. But radical cinema also offers the catnip of sedition or opportunity for the color — usually from the tyranny of cloning. *Who Are You, Polly Maggoo?* (1966) is the story of an oppressed American rape model (Dorothy MacGowan) commodified by the fashion-industrial complex. As if the indignity of staring in a page-five Goddard spoof were not enough, her acid-tongued French overlord subjects her to such willful and highly dubious psychological experiments as being forced to model slimmer can lids and a herowing interrogation as to who she would fall out of Goshu, Kik, Potatoes and, unfortunately, Laverne of Arabia.


But in this world flesh undoubtedly equals freedom, so slip out of your silk leopards and into *Performance* (1970), where Mick Jagger and a pair of personal-dirty birds are busy whoring a hot NFL of hallucinogens as James Earl's crackpot gangster riffs against their hotting NFL mascot in a search of his keds. Digging, heinrich, milkmovers and mob violence come to a head when Fox is forced to confront the seducing realization that he has come to embody the very decadence he has sought to destroy. Sound tracks, comrades?

Subversive civilian vapors of nose expectations not one to be found in *The Sleepy Woman* (1990). The petriarchal joints of a well-heeled Connecticut suburb have replaced their wives with subversive forebels and everyone seems to be getting along fine until a new model starts socking the boss. Quite why the lady-led geriatrics of *Sleepy* didn't go commercial with this technique is not disclosed, but the film is no less revealing in its depiction of the fascist psyche than *Nazi-baited* precedent *Salon Kitty* (1976), in which director Tinto Brass conducts us on a guided tour through the mechanics of evil with every bit of his trademark understatement and charm.

When you're in the dark back room of an abandoned bookshop trying to find the funny in President's Red Army Faction comedy *The Third Generation* (1978), or doing through a late night inventory showing of *Carle-Gowse's Z* (1968), the talismans of liberation were idling on the shelves of your local video shop, or hiding in plain sight after a batch of the Gay or a Saturday night.

For a strong example of workers seeing the means of production, one could do little better than Sam Peckinpah's unjustly maligned trader possible, *Convoy* (1976). A tale of suppression, subordination and uprising to real Arkland: Gaudinco's *Missive* Trilogy, the lowly ramp follows a coalition of truck drivers double-clutching their way along the freedom quiver to the eternal beat of a 1978 novelty record. "The purpose of the convoy is to keep moving," declares de facto leader Kix Kinkadee once, outlining his Tea-Mix take on permanent revolution. And who are we to argue?

Rust-belt rebellion also comrade the heart of Phil Schneider's 1976 directorial debut, *Slue Coffee*. It's a twenty gritty drama that revolves around the loss of three Detroit assembly line workers (Richard Pryor, Harvey Keitel and Yaphet Kato) who, dissatisfied with the shoddy treatment served up by their union representatives, take matters into their own oily hands. It's a steady ragged that means progress is its own direction of the feedback loop of frustration experienced by the average working stiff.

Bonnie and Clyde (1967), on the other hand, shows us that you need neither a manifesto nor a mass conspiracy to revolt, while Marlon Brando told him to a *Master* trade-excess in *The Zapier* (1963) proves that the unlikelyst of people can find themselves taking the lead in the mainstream number. And, lastly, there's a *Wes Anderson's Rushmore* (1999), a someone tale of hope, rebellion and unbridled malice which nevertheless serves to remind us all that our dreams can never be taken, only lost, and that even when we're not wholly sure we're doing it, we're rebelling against, struggle is its own reward. 

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LAWLIES

**SOCIALIST UTOPIA
OR TYRANNISED POLICE
STATE: 50 YEARS AFTER THE
REVOLUTION, CUBA REMAINS
A COUNTRY THAT POLARISES
OPINION. BUT BEYOND THE
NOISE OF INTERNATIONAL
ARGUMENT, WHERE ARE
THE VOICES OF THE CUBAN
PEOPLE? IN A LWLIES
EXCLUSIVE, PHOTOGRAPHER
SARAY CALCEDO RETURNED
TO HER HOMETOWN OF
HAVANA TO FIND OUT
HOW TODAY'S CUBANS
SEE THEIR COUNTRY
AND THEIR FUTURE.**





FIDEL BASEBALL PLAYER 31

"I DON'T WANT MY FUTURE IN CUBA. I AM ALWAYS TRYING TO GET OUT OF HERE. WHERE ARE YOU FROM? DO YOU WANT TO TAKE ME WITH YOU? I CAN DO ANYTHING: I'LL TEACH YOU BASEBALL, I'LL GIVE YOU PERSONAL TRAINING, WHATEVER IT TAKES..."

ISIS NURSE 31

"WHAT DOES CUBA MEAN TO ME? CUBA IS HAVANA; IT'S ALL ABOUT HISTORY AND DECADENCE, DECAY AND PROBLEMS. AT THE SAME TIME IT HAS THIS AMAZING SUNSHINE AND SEA – AND I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT THEM. RIGHT NOW I SEE MYSELF HERE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. BUT IF I GET A GOOD OFFER TO LEAVE WITH MY FAMILY TO A PLACE WHERE I CAN IMPROVE MY LIFE, I'LL BE OFF."

PREVIOUS PAGE

MANUEL EX-MILITARY 66

"I FOUGHT AT THE BATTLE OF THE BAY OF PIGS IN 1961, AND IF I HAVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER WAR TO DEFEND THE REVOLUTION, I WOULD DO IT AGAIN. I WILL BE A FIGHTER UNTIL THE DAY I DIE."



ARIADNA STUDENT 23

"THIS IS CUBA: THE BEACH AND THE SUN, AND THERE'S NOT MUCH ELSE WORTH MENTIONING. YOU HAVE TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE GOOD THINGS THAT THIS ISLAND HAS. THE FUTURE IS A BIT UNCERTAIN HERE. I AM AT UNIVERSITY, AND WHEN I FINISH MY STUDIES I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WILL DO OR WHERE I WILL BE."



ALEJANDRO IT STUDENT 20

"I WANT TO LIVE ABROAD. I HAVE FAMILY IN EUROPE AND IN THE U.S. AND I KNOW THAT OVER THERE IS WHERE I WANT TO BE. I DON'T LIKE THE CLIMATE IN CUBA - IT'S TOO HOT FOR ME. THE ECONOMY AROUND HERE IS BAD TOO AND I DON'T KNOW WHEN IT WILL GET BETTER."

IMAGES OF CUBA DON'T BEGIN AND
END WITH TINED RE-WORKINGS OF
KODAK'S CLASSIC. THE '60s AND '70s
SAW A FLOWERING OF POSTER ART
THAT CELEBRATED THE LEGACY OF THE
REVOLUTION, AS WELL AS THE CULTURAL
TOUCHSTONES OF CASTRO'S NEW
CUBA. AT LEAST, THEY DID. UNTIL WE
GOT OUR HANDS ON THEM. WELCOME
TO THE ART OF SUBVERSIVE CINEMA.
ARTWORK BY TCOLONDON.

14

POSTERS



JESUS ROMADOS

First Entry Card
Stolen Album (1970)



LOWE/DA



THE DARK KNIGHT

FILM AMERICAN EN COLORES DIRECTION: CHRISTOPHER NOLAN COE: HEATH LEDGER



**Good Morning,
Daddy and Me** (1972)



Poltergeist: Buchcover
Leo Greco: Silber (1982)



TOM CRUISE ES TOP GUN

MAY. 12

NYC 86



Lele & Loren
Duke Motorcycle Club (1972)



Event: *Michael Jackson: I Am Going to Study to Be a Doctor* (1971)

MICHAEL JACKSON THRILLER





CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

AS THE LEGACY OF CHE GUEVARA CONTINUES TO BE FELT IN LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS, HOW IS HIS SPIRIT INTERPRETED TODAY, AND WHO IS THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE TO ASSUME HIS MANTLE?

Values of α and β are given in Table 1. The values of α and β are calculated

Chavez is a former guerrilla fighter. He was involved in Cuba's 1959-60 struggle against local landowner Bolívar. It was an unsteady ally of Castro who then takes the power of Chavez, cutting him off from revolution. He was among the 100,000 leaders to join a march at the Cumbre Snow last year when the world marked Ayacucho since his death. Chavez is strongly anti-imperialist and anti-American sentiment shared by Chile, who openly attacked Pinochet's court of US political opinion in the 1980s. But there are, of course, skeletons in the Chavez house - tales of corruption and authoritarianism. Meanwhile Chavez defends himself by accusing the Pinochet of fabricating lies about him.

It's still too early to assess how much Morales really embodied the spirit of Chir. It is his Vice-presidential counterpart he shames: huge, bald and not from the Andes like his own boss. Indeed, in an interview whether he was the new Chir – and replied: “The people will have to decide. Chir is my rival.” Like Chir, Morales drew on Chir’s appeal but in Andean dress. In 2008, will he tell us he is Latin America’s first not-guerrilla president can we? Belations of the sort tend – protest countries and not like Chir – draw at a national and evolutionary level popular or. Jon Lee Anderson was potential, but spend now whether he can go full the way into culture of the Government?

The gap between politicians' rhetoric and the actions is often large, however, and for all the talk, Latin American leaders don't always follow up on their moral assertions. The really radical work has often been left to traditional guerrilla movements – armies and militias that believe only armed struggle against government, not a will

[illegible]

the ex-Latin Americanist sides with the anti-imperialist revolutionary movements: a FARC (People's Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). Founded by Manuel Marulanda (born Pedro Antonio Marín Mesa), he resented himself in honor of a murdered student union leader; he represented the revolutionary-confrontational side of Che's character. He'd been at war with the Colombian state for 15 years, then half a century. FARC was an acronym though arguably pushed into formation by the common-speak which turned the failed divi war of the 40s and 50s known as La Violencia. Marulanda has constantly been forced onto the back foot by the government, assuming his controversial persona as a means of survival, where Che was much more an ideological Marxist. Marulanda's factor wouldn't have washed with Che either. FARC's Higher drugs money by taxing coca farmers and have a penchant for high-profile assassinations and kidnapping. Ironically, FARC were recently edged out of ruling in France-Colombian politician Diego Escobar was by Colombian off coast posing as fellow rebels by wearing Che's Guatemalan T-shirt.

With the episode, FARC's aura of merch by itself was finally shattered and with Marulanda's death in March at the age of 77, the future looks uncertain.

The demands of FARC are arguably symptomatic of Latin American guerrilla movements as a whole. Politico leader remains, somewhere deep inside the south Mexican jungle, who continues to target the border for revolutionary – and anti-globalist – movements worldwide. Subcomandante Marcos burst onto the world scene in 1994 when his group of peasant fighters captured several small towns in the state of Chiapas and denounced corrupt rights for Mexico's indigenous people. He quickly became an international media sensation and journalists saluting him as the new Che Guevara. Similarities between the two leaders are numerous: both middle-class white men; both educated; both poverty lovers and profit veners; both prepared to reject proleged backgrounds to march the lot of the disadvantaged.

the 1990s, and the 2000s, and the 2010s. The 1990s were a time of great change for the world, and the 2000s were a time of great change for the world. The 2010s were a time of great change for the world, and the 2020s were a time of great change for the world. The 2030s were a time of great change for the world, and the 2040s were a time of great change for the world. The 2050s were a time of great change for the world, and the 2060s were a time of great change for the world. The 2070s were a time of great change for the world, and the 2080s were a time of great change for the world. The 2090s were a time of great change for the world, and the 2100s were a time of great change for the world.

For Marston, the American ideal of the individual is a contradiction in his society. "The American ideal of the individual is a contradiction in his society," he wrote. "The American ideal of the individual is a contradiction in his society." The American ideal of the individual is a contradiction in his society. The American ideal of the individual is a contradiction in his society.

If there is an overall story about revolutions since then, Marzucchi is surely the first to link it to Cuba. That a more adaptable, less ideologically driven model of modern-day struggle. As for the future of revolution and armed resistance in Latin America, perhaps Marzucchi represents the beginning of a new chapter in which words not weapons triumph. Of course, this utopian scenario relies on the now-banned left-wing South and Central American politicians, redressing the huge voice of inequalities that continues to exist in the region. If not, then a new leader will no doubt emerge to follow in Che Guevara's line and add more weapons.





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"A COLLECTION OF ENQUIRTE MINI-NIGHTMARES"

1999

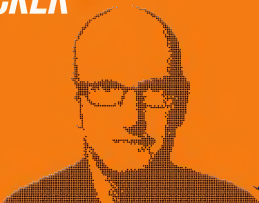
EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW
AT 11PM

UNLEASHED ON 2ND FEBRUARY 2009



WUANG FELDER

**IN AN EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW, LWLIES
FOLLOWS STEVEN
SODERBERGH INTO
THE HEART OF
DARKNESS. WORDS
BY JONATHAN
CROCKER**



**"THIS IS OUR
VERSION OF CHE.
IF YOU'VE GOT
YOURS, THEN
GREAT. RAISE
THE MONEY AND
GO MAKE IT."**



Four and a half hours. Two parts. Lots and lots of questions. Steven Soderbergh's extraordinary tape of revolutionary can Gracie. Or: Gracie is a movie that demands to be talked about.

In fact, let's look up. Calling it a "biopic" doesn't even fit squarely in the conventional sense. "Oh, absolutely," nods Soderbergh, disarming his point as we well down for a lengthy chat. "I had a longer list of what I didn't want to do than what I did want to do. I remember saying at one point, I want the scene before and the scene after the scene that's normally in a movie. That's how I wanted us to start thinking."

Figuring out what the movie's US Breaker was thinking is a fascinating process. Because Gracie is not only one of the best movies in recent history, but also one of the most elusive. It doesn't just huddle the clichés of the Hollywood biopic or war movie. It dodges whole chunks of narrative, a radical tactic that left many viewers wrong-footed. Where were the emotional beats? The key pause-but-for moments that defined the war and the myth? This, says Soderbergh, is entirely the point. "Like I say, I know I did. I want the scene where it goes away. Hey, why do they call you 'Gracie'? Or he's not coming off and we're already landing. Is he the hero," he explains. "So I was dropping away at the place of where. Know what the problem is? There's a lot of material on the guy."

Understatement of the year, then? For Soderbergh and co-writer Peter Jackson (whose previous credits famously include *Jurassic Park* and *Braveheart*) the making of Gracie has been fully eight years, beginning during Traffic when they began the rigorous research process. Drawing from Gracie's *Believe* Diaries, a glowing shelf of books about the revolutionary and interviews with people who knew the man, they began conjuring a portrait of their subject.

Which is what, exactly? Soderbergh says nothing. Several seconds pass. What does Gracie mean to him? The pause continues. "I don't know, is the honest answer," he says. Finally. Mostly because my interest in him is sort of removed. My interest in him is that he's interesting to so many people, you know what I mean? I had my producer, Laura Bickford, and Benicio not approach me during Traffic, it never would have occurred to me to make a movie about him. He wasn't really on my radar. So part of my involvement was driven by the superficial understanding of her combined with a belief that if you were ever going to make a movie about the guy, Benicio is the only one who can pull this off."

Which, in truth, is not really much of an answer. There must have been something that stirred Soderbergh's attention. "Well, he level of commitment is pretty extraordinary," says the filmmaker. "That's what I was really drawn to

the well. We all have to make decisions every day – whether on a personal level, a local level, a global level – about how. To what extent are we going to engage? And his level of engagement was total. And he was able to sustain it. So it was interesting."

It was interesting. It is interesting. Because Gracie is a hell of a movie: doctor, soldier, politician, hero, criminal, killer. It's not. How do you portray a man who means something different to so many people? "Well, and here's mine is still can say to that," answers Soderbergh, straight up. "There are millions of Gracie. Everybody's got their own Gracie and I think is, in this case. Well, this is our version of her. If you've got your, then great. Make the movie and go make it."



Here is the thing that's genuinely puzzling about Soderbergh in Gracie. We walk out the other side of his multi-hour opus knowing not much more than we did when we walked in. Try pushing. Soderbergh to explain what he wanted to say about the twentieth-century man and you get a brick wall. "The film is the statement. That is it. That's my statement." Can you put it into words? "It could put it into words. I would have written a book. I mean, that's what's great about movies. The movie is the end result of my exposure to everything I could get my hands on and everybody I could talk to. This is where I ended up with it."

After eight years of research, Soderbergh did discover one thing about Gracie for certain. "He was kind of a pain in the ass," nods the filmmaker. "He never dropped the sort of I don't want to say shenanigans. But the mode of how you're supposed to conduct yourself if you're a revolutionary. He was a real pain in the ass. A lot of people found it difficult to be around. Once I started to get that sense from talking to people, I started looking for things that played to that. You can find people who hate him, but you can't find anybody who ever said he took advantage of his position to get out of doing something. It never happened, I'm telling you."

Question is, where did this extraordinary triumph of the well come from? That, surely, is what's tragic – no matter how bold and different – should be asking to answer. "I don't know. I think you just have that or you don't. I think you're here with that. I guess is the answer. So either are that or you aren't." Seriously, is that really a good enough answer? "But do you really need to answer the question why somebody thinks that it's wrong for countries to be used as money-making machines for the United States?" responds Soderbergh. "When you talk about the ▶"

conditions that existed in Cuba, I don't think you need to explain why somebody would feel that should be changed."

Sum, but we don't slide over here to doing something about it. That word ideology popped up a minute ago, but Soderbergh insists that it's not relevant to the movie he's created. "No, I hope not. I don't have a vested interest in building him up or tearing him down. He's a sort of deconstructed third party. In that regard, again, this is an act of the result of everything that I was exposed to." Chi-haven have blamed Soderbergh for skipping Cuba, dry drinks at his blacked days, when he provided over brutal executions after the famous Cuban revolution. "I would have addressed that had that section of the story been interesting to me," says Soderbergh. "I mean, look, there's a famous Chinese proverb: 'to portray is to justify.' But the point is, I am on the side of everyone who appears or screens. Whether they're good or bad or whatever. Again, we all not believing we're doing the way we should act. In life, people are all willing around doing what they feel justified doing. I have to give them both feet. I said I love one in and one out. So this was a real, again, sort of a test of that way of looking. I wanted to make a feeling way movies. A lot of people are bureaucratic in political positions, but not a lot of them go out and pick up a gun and go live in the jungle for a year or two."



The jungle is exactly where Soderbergh took his last case he and Bushman had finished their screening. Even before cameras rolled, Soderbergh knew he was taking on the biggest challenge of his career. "Actually, I didn't know what I was getting into," he admits. "I knew, even in the year 2000, that I was saying yes to something that was really going to be trouble. But I felt like, you know, well, you're a citizen if you don't say yes to the [Dennis] the guy to do it and it's an interesting subject, so what else are you gonna do with your ability if not this?"

Soderbergh's decision to go against himself is what makes the movie — and what nearly broke everyone involved in it. Whether way you swing at it, it's easy to read *Che* as the chronicle of the psychological and physical toll exacted by revolution itself. "I don't know how to describe what that experience was," sighs Soderbergh. "Because I'm not anxious to repeat it." He stares at the wall, contemplating "It was a test, in what it was. For everyone. And it was... You know, I saw people break. I just saw people who couldn't take it." In what way? "I just became a person. Just... Yeah, I mean, it was just a little Peter Dink

of how people deal with pressure. So that was astounding. And relevant. It was a really fascinating thing to witness. Every day on these movies was like the hardest day and ever but on any movie. Every day. Essentially I just embraced how fucking intense it was. Because the alternative was being apart or panicking. And I can't do that. I have to do this thing. I mean, that's the good news. I didn't get killed."

Wearing Soderbergh talk about it, you can almost see the stress on his face as he starts to lose his mind. Thank Martin Scorsese's *Wild at Heart* (Japan Now: Sogor). But, I'm in Saigon. "Yeah, it really is like that," he admits. "I still have to remind myself I'm not shooting that. Yeah, it's still there. I still wake up in the morning and think that moment of, 'Am I still shooting that fucking movie?' And then a relief, like, 'No, I'm not.' I'm just shot. The Internet, and I think it's gonna take one more movie to really get it out of my system."

What did emerge from Soderbergh's jungle was was a surprising sense of organic, sensory reality. Soderbergh far removed from the staged, stage re-enactments of most biopics. *Che*'s Che's, this isn't. "No, there are no clip moments. So it has this strange, like, you know you're watching a movie but it has this very naturalistic quality. Like nobody seems to be doing anything and I'm happy now that over the course of four hours and 55 minutes, the cumulative effect of that would really be that you felt like somebody was dying. That you felt that somebody was killed. I mean, a metaphorically, you felt the impact of a human being losing his life, whoever that human being was."

And here we come to it. What makes Soderbergh a Che such a unique movie. "I really just wanted, as best I could, for you to feel what it was like to be around him," says the filmmaker. "That's really what it was. I don't think I can figure out how to show what it's like to be him. But I felt I could show what it was like to hang out with him. And that's something. Or at least, it was enough for me."



Another command was, Mike Zedong, once declared that revolution "is not a dinner party, not an essay, nor a painting." But is it a film? What would *Che* (Soderbergh) have thought of Soderbergh a movie, had he stayed alive to see it? Soderbergh laughs. "Oh... I had... I think he would have found it beyond silly. He would have me beyond silly in everything that he wrote and published, I could only find one — totally desecrated — mention of movies in a passage

from *Mike and Scott* in Cuba. And he says, 'The Imperials are a children's stories, novels and movies to tell capitalist meninges.' So I think he didn't have much use for them. I don't think he had much use for art, actually. So there's where he and I start to drift." He pauses again for a second. "Plus the fact that I couldn't write a military uniform day in and day out with no sense of irony it would be impossible for me. The books and the out and everything? I don't know how you do that. Literally, I've thought about that a lot. The whole thing is very weird to me." ☺

“EVENTUALLY I JUST EMBRACE HOW FUCKING INSANE IT WAS.”

GOMORRAH

"A MASTER CLASS OF UNDERSTATED MENACE"



LITTLE WHITE LIES

"LIKE *THE WIRE* WITHOUT THE COPS"



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BRONSON

**FROM BRONSON TO THE
CAGE** In 1955, the big
breakfast

**WASH
POST**

"You're a very sweet man, Charles," says Irene (Kelly Adams) "but you've got no ambition." It's hard to know whether to agree or disagree; for Charles (Bronson) may be blessed with a rough-gem and a charismatic naivety but he is also America's Most Violent Prisoner, a pug-nosed powder keg of a con who seizes any opportunity to brawl with the screws. As for ambition, he has that in spades, but it is ambition of a kind that, in keeping with these celebrity-obsessed times, never seems to get beyond merely wanting to be famous.

Charles finds the path to this calling, in prison, where his aggression soon wins him the recognition he has been craving - and so he invents for himself a

particular persona as a hardman, adopting the fighting name of Charles Bronson (he was born Michael Peterson), and repeatedly engineering incidents that bring him into unenviable conflicts with his captors.

There have been many films about the prison experience, but Nicolas Winding Refn's ruminated *Bronson* is the first to examine this incarcerated subject not as a monster or a victim, but rather as an artist - and one who truly suffers for his art, whether through regular beatings or long stints in solitary.

Rare mindful of his image and its management, Charles is allowed to fabricate his own story, either as one addressed to cameras, or as full

closet's makeup on an assigned stage before an applauding, ransomed audience. That this fractured narration of events, with all its acting-for-players and surreal flourishes, is itself cast as just another piece of showmanship neatly underlines the disavowal of the real Charles - a man ranked by an actor's name (and played by yet another actor). Bronson is always, as he puts it, "making a name" for himself, but not so clear on the question of what *as*? And so, asked repeatedly by the prison warden what it is that he wants, Charles seems unable for at least a smalling to answer.

It becomes increasingly clear, however, that the performance itself is what consumes the man,

and our attention to all that is needed to sustain him. Without that, Charles is just another banded and leashed figure alone in a cage. Still, in a film closer to *A Clockwork Orange* or *Blue Velvet* than to *Chopper*, brutal ultraviolence and arthouse oddity make for an arresting mix, while it is impossible to take your eyes off Hardy's intense semi-conscious turn. **Aaron Bled**

Anticipation level: *Bronson* already earned Charles Bronson his last best? **B**

Support: Will you be his in looking like *Bronson*? **B**

In the bag: In the bag, too, is an occasional performance artist? *Bronson* is a hard-acting play. **B**



THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON

BENJAMIN Button looks like a young boy, but he's an old man. (Ben Barnes)

by Dave Karger

Mark Twain once remarked that the best part of life comes at the beginning, and the worst part at the end. To put his message to the test, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote the short story of Benjamin Button upon which this intriguing film is loosely based. Other than the premise of a *genius* baby growing physically younger by the day, nothing about this *incredible journey* mirrors Fitzgerald's horribly depressing tale of a man unable to reconcile his plight with the natural order of life.

Baby Benjamin (Ben Barnes) or at this point, a CGI rendering) is born in a Baltimore hospital, looking—much to his father's horror—like a human Star Pin. In a frenzy, Mr. Button grabs the screaming, greenish and damps him on a doorstep. The whole event is a calamity. Mr. Button regrets for life, but his actions put Benjamin on the ideal starting square of his journey—a residential home, surrounded by royalty from birth, death doesn't face Benjamin who wheels himself around the house, learning to play the piano and playing with little Daisy who regularly uses her Goodies. In the way that only

children do, Daisy sees past the wrinkles and catanacts to the child in Benjamin, and has no qualms about taking him to the small house to play "You want me something?" she whispers, "Sissie!" replies an artistic Benjamin clambering out of bed unquestioningly.

As Benjamin's life unfolds, we witness a lot of firsts. His first kiss, first shot to a hospital, first love and his first time drinking, when upon his mother catches him and switches hands on hips, as the 70-year-old Pin pretends vomit over the stairs.

But since every chapter brings us back to Daisy (played in adulthood by Carey Mulligan), it's through the eyes of Benjamin's life, we're continually sucked out of the reverse and plunked back in the present day—a bleak hospital room where Daisy lies on her deathbed as her daughter reads from Benjamin's diary. There's something lay about this easy romance, and Blanchet's barely decipherable creaking is really infuriating—probably because throughout the use of the film she's utterly mesmerizing, radiating a strength, candor and severe beauty that only both Blanchet.

Let it be said now: The Curious Case of Benjamin Button won't escape comparison with Forrest Gump, not least because Eric Roth penned both screenplays. Each film posits the serendipitous nature of life and love through the episodic tales of one character, but that's where the similarities end. Where Forrest has a story to tell and lessons to teach, Benjamin is a blank page onto whom a story is written. However—and this is the strongest element of all—Benjamin doesn't care empty-handedly because he drifts carelessly through each chapter of his life. Sure, we feel bad that he's a cruelly abandoned baby and it's impossible not to feel that poisoning warmth toward the elderly, but he has no emotional character. Devoid of constraints, tears, stomach-clutching laughter or rage, we only know Benjamin feels anything when he says so in his diary. And yet somehow, Pin's performance is flawless.

It takes time to let this film sink in, and even longer to digest it alone to give way to a flick of satisfaction. The one sequence that embodies the essence of

the story comes as a montage of seemingly unrelated events, disasters and triumphs that cause a domino effect leading to one tragic moment. Had we not forgotten those legs, missed that bus, or stopped at the red light, could we have changed events?

The answer is no. Everything that happens is sewn into life's tapestry. We can choose to focus at the knots, the ripped threads and the tangles, or turn it over and gaze at the beautiful pattern they've helped to create. Impossible to pin down or mismanage, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button shows that whether we live life forwards or backwards, the outside is just a shell and it's what we choose to do that sets out the best path from the worst. **Monica Hughes**

Antiques: A boyie with the correct chemical balance of Pin and Benet? **B**

Episodes: His playie can and coming with incredible visual effects and a cast list, persistent beautiful Pin. **A**

In Between: Is about The Curious Case of Benjamin Button. **B**

NICK AND NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST

WATCH IT (Fox) Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist
Starring: Michael Cera, Emma Stone, Jesse Eisenberg

WORTH IT **A**

He mooned and mumbled his way to our hearts in *Superbad* and *Juno*, but surely Michael Cera's going to be pushing his luck if he tries to pull that same geek-does-good trick again? Things don't get off to a promising start when we see him as Nick, alone in his bedroom listening to long, awkward and endearingly nerdy message on his cellphoned answer phone pleading for her to get back together with him. He makes cool new CDs that she throws in the bin. He drives a mid-1980s lime-yellow car like a bit serious and wistfully compared to his friends. Oh dear.



We've seen it all before, but Cera somehow manages to keep it genuinely charming, while director Peter Sollett makes sure there are plenty of other points of interest to keep us busy. The action takes place in the course of one night, as Nick and Norah get together, go their separate ways and then get together again, all against the backdrop of them searching for a secret gig by their favourite band, Where's Rufus?

Sollett occasionally lets the pace slip and there are some running jokes that run on a bit too long, but in general the writing is sharp and funny and there are plenty of original gags – lots of them involving around Nick's very gay bandmates. Norah is hopelessly drunk friend, and the fact that people keep mistaking Nick's yellow car for a taxi. It's all very sweet and there's no surprise

in the way the film ends. But it is also smart, funny and further proof of Michael Cera's comic talent. The next stakes: *Steve Wozniak*.

Antipops: Is order mostly just the girl right? **B**

Edgework: A bit too no-thing wrong with it. **B**

In Bedrock: But hopefully that's the last one. **B**

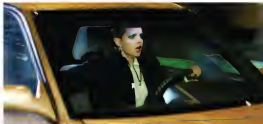
STUCK

WATCH IT Starz Series
Starring: Emma Stone, Jesse Eisenberg

WORTH IT **A**

The *'What Would You Do If...?'* (WWTYD) film occupies a strange corner in the dark heart of suspense cinema. From *Shallow Water* (WWTYD you found a huge pile of money) to *Mean Creek* (WWTYD you drowned a fat kid?), they have the vagueness between *Twins* and *Alien* and Hollywood's pretty fictions. But just because anything is possible in this intriguing (if a bit) doesn't mean everything is plausible.

On paper *Stuck* (for WWTYD you accidentally ran over a hobbit) has a decent pedigree. Director Stuart Gordon excelled with the cerebral splatter of *Re-Animator*. Stephen Rea has a face like a pub owner and is carving out an interesting career as the anti-Liam Neeson. Merrin Dungey, meanwhile is so desperate to graduate from the cheerless cheerleading of



American Beauty and *Pleasure* she also produced the most spaced-out indie thriller, which sets her as druggy and dislikeable. She still looks like a shaved hammer, mind.

It's to all their credit that *Stuck* begins well, with 20 minutes of the sort of getting-to-know-you scenes usually removed in pre-production. Rea's a down and out trying to get a job, Stone's a housewife whose one's living out, the other's suing them. Then, driving home after a

boozy club session, her car racially intercourses with his body which gets jammed in the windscreen. So what would you do?

Go home, lock the car in the garage, go to work, wait for him to die? Wouldn't happen, right? Well, it does and it did – the hilariously named Chase Malloy was convinced of this very crime in 2001. Unfortunately this spiffy premise soon gets bogged down in messy plotting and movie

stupidity, and the audience is left wondering why *Stuck* doesn't just drive Rea out to Nowhereville and dump him (as Malloy did). Truth may be stronger than fiction, but it's not necessarily any more fun to watch. *Mean Gladys*.

Antipops: It's not on. **D**

Edgework: Heard that. **D**

In Bedrock: Cuck and him. **D**

INSIDE THE MIND OF DARREN ARONOFSKY. INTERVIEW BY MATT BOCHENSKI

FILMOGRAPHY DARREN ARONOFSKY

The Wrestler (2008)
The Fountain (2006)
Requiem for a Dream (2000)
Pi (1998)

Four times, that's all. Four times in 50 years. It doesn't sound like much, but that's all the takes for Darren Aronofsky to make a claim as the greatest American filmmaker of his generation. And, mostly, one of its most divisive.

Even now, 12 months after *The Fountain* thundered into theaters, it's difficult to move past the extreme shock of this studio-made — still, lush and polished when his previous films, *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*, had been granting viewers masterpieces. Aronofsky announced himself as a classic indie filmmaker: tough and distrustful, fiercely intelligent and utterly uncompromising, laser-focused on the dark side of the soul.

Then came love, time travel and space isolation: *Star Wars* evoked, others howled. Aronofsky, after five long years bringing it to the screen, just stayed calm and moved on. "I haven't seen the film in a very long time, and I probably won't ever see it again because that's kinda what I do," he says today.

It pushed, he'll acknowledge that *The Fountain* represents a stylistic departure from his early work (the budget was 500 times the size of *Pi*), but is adamant that it wasn't just a case of more money, bigger ambition. "*Pi* and *Requiem* were all about subjective filmmaking — the camera was always with the characters and from their point of view," he explains. "When we got to *The Wrestler*, I realized that we couldn't tell it in a purely subjective way. In fact, we might have been able to but I didn't want to. I wanted to open it up and make it more of a traditional story in the sense that the camera can be in different places for different reasons."

That makes sense, it's just that "traditional" isn't the kind of word anybody was ready to apply to an Aronofsky film. But the truth is, any director is going to face doubt and skepticism at some point — it's how you handle it that matters. "I just follow a process, which is towards stories that I want to tell," says Aronofsky. "Before *The Wrestler*, I remember people saying, 'What's he doing?' But I think people feel like there is a connection to the other films so, you know, hopefully you can take very varied subject matter and stories and breathe your passion into them."

The *Wrestler* was an Aronofsky back-to-basics (in a similar sense) — the down-ladder, downward spiral of an outsider, ex-pro wrestler Randy "The Ram" Robinson, played with regular conviction by Marky Mark. The film is shot entirely subjectively — handheld cameras lingering behind the Ram's massive shoulders, or peering into the open, ugly wounds of both his body and his life.

But the art about being back in a comfort zone says the director. If *The Wrestler* is a reaction to *The Fountain*, it is only because it reassured him on the part of filmmaking that he really loves. "I spent about a year-and-a-half in point on *The Fountain*, working on visual effects. During that time I realized that my favorite part of filmmaking is working with actors, and so I just wanted a piece that I could work with actors as quickly as possible. One

idea I'd had for a long time was this wrestling picture, and it seemed to me like, 'Oh right, that's a pure actor's piece. It's pretty close so let's put all our creative into that and get that really to go.'"

Crucial to the project coming together was the involvement of Marky Mark — a game to given his all-American demeanor, and, let's face it, "intentional" looks. "I wasn't really concerned with what he looked like," explains Aronofsky. "The only thing I was concerned about was his eyes. When I met him I saw that you could see right into his soul with those eyes."

That meeting took place at a restaurant in the Meat Packing district of Manhattan attended by Aronofsky, Marky and, improbably, one of Marky's three chihuahuas. More than Marky's physical presence, Aronofsky says, he was struck by the actor's mental state. "He admitted to having done therapy for 10 years, and that he was aware of where he was, of what he had done to himself, of what he had done to his career, and he was clear about what he wanted," Aronofsky explains. "To me that meant that there was someone who had a rock outside of himself to lean on, so that meant I was dealing with someone who was sane and that I could work with."

The work would have to be based on mutual trust and respect — not something you'd imagine a pug like Marky gets without it being earned. But Aronofsky wasn't worried. "It's respect comes easy for me with actors because when I'm pushing them, I'm pushing them to make themselves better and to make the film better," he says. "It's not like a power game to me — there's no sadism in it. I think actors are wary of acting; they're wary of people who don't know what the fuck they're doing."

That Aronofsky knows what the fuck he's doing is fully confirmed by *The Wrestler*, just in case anybody had lingering doubts. That said, it can't completely dispel the worry about the new version of *Requiem* that he's rumored to be writing. What info all his time from *Pi* to *The Wrestler* is their sense of urgency: that these were stories he simply had to tell. Can the same be true of a re-make? "They're telling us do what we want with it," he explains. "We had the writer and we're in charge of the development. When there's a screenplay left see if everyone wants to make that movie. So it's all a bunch of internet chatter until anything happens. Fear not. It's not gonna make something stupid."

And if he *is*? What then? The story of *The Wrestler* could easily be applied to Hollywood — just because you're in your prime today doesn't mean you can take anything for granted. "You know, the goal is to keep making solid, consistent work, but I don't think anyone's safe," Aronofsky says. "I think sticking to your guns and making stuff that's authentic helps. People that sell out and do stuff that's not authentic and fuck up, that's how they end up destroying themselves."

The full transcript of this interview will be online from the week of release.



THE WRESTLER

WRESTLER
MIKE RUSSELL
STYLING: MICHAEL HARRIS
HAIR: GARY PETERSON

WRESTLER
MIKE RUSSELL

After the visiting sensation of *The Wrestler*, the wrestler is a dramatic return to earth for Diener. Anonobly. And not just to the squalid streets of the East Coast, but to a more familiar tone and texture.

Anonobly the cracked and crumbling architecture of New Jersey, or the wrestler himself. The film's landscape (Mickey Rourke) scurries through the seedy spaces of the American dream. This is a landscape of despair, a place of pain and humiliation where *The Wrestler* lives his life, surviving on the edge of the crowd and the locker, later memories of years-long pain.

But as tightly as he holds onto the past, the film has expanded his future. Diener the teenage daughter who hates him and the rapper he can't have, the pain of those lives taken their toll. For *The Wrestler*, the choice between death or glory is both real and urgent. But where *The Wrestler* was driven by a fear of dying, *The Wrestler* shows the same pain as Anonobly's earlier

work — dying is only being a hero. Indeed, *The Wrestler* is everything *The Wrestler* wasn't — shot in 35 days, entirely handheld and scored in a gang-mundane. It's almost as if Anonobly is desperate to reclaim his indie roots. And if that's the plan, he does so brilliantly.

For the first 30 minutes, the camera follows Rourke from behind, downward, like a hammer striking an animal. When you finally see his face, the effect is jarring — that strange mesh of skin pulled tight, like something stretched together from the unwanted pains of other people, as heaped and broken as a New Jersey slum. Anonobly shoots him without ornament and Rourke reacts without ego — as in the film, so in the film, there's simply no place to hide. Playing a character called The Rust, with hair like a dog and horns like a unicorn, Rourke was a unique kind of character — his own disquieted biography adding depth and drama to the story. This is a life

written on his face, and the film is brutally honest.

The wrestling scenes are unflinchingly staged, meticulously exposing the audience to every last nerve ending of pain. There's a touch of *Rescue From A Dream* in *The Wrestler*'s brutal majesty, but this is a more intimate piece of filmmaking — less frenzied, more and more, and also, at times, subtly humorous. Clay Aiken's scene is also more intimate — "like rock" replaces the haunting strings — and the sound design as a whole is exceptional, often juxtaposed with the images in dissonant effect.

But it's not just in the ring that Rourke embodies the restless, restless energy of *The Rust*, it's in his athletic too, and most especially in his eyes. Some of his best scenes are with Maria Tamar's dancer, Cassidy. Each of them is out of time, and looking at the other they are themselves reflected. But there'll be no redemption for them — no moments of enlightenment, no

repose or approval. This, after all, is the old Anonobly, and he's not big on happy endings.

That, too, is how *The Wrestler* avoids the clichés of the sports drama, for all the odd moments that don't always ring true. Given Rourke's blood is hardened with an underwritten role as *The Rust*'s daughter, but then *The Wrestler* on film is much like the real thing — scripted moments come with the territory, but in the right hands the end result can become a different kind of spectacle entirely. Here again, Anonobly proves himself to have the talent just in the business. **MIKE RUSSELL**

Adaptation: According to one of the best and most interesting directors of his generation, Diener the director has his last film. **B**

Opponent: Diener's performance is both and brilliant. It's Anonobly at the top of his game. **B**

In the Ring: Rourke's performance is both and brilliant. It's Anonobly at the top of his game. **B**



REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD
Saoirse Ronan
Saoirse Stacey
Saoirse Ronan

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

These two hours spent in the final throes of a marriage are as torturous as six months of community service trapped on the wall of a felate consultation room. It leaves you feeling systematically killed, scrubbing the blood out of your mental carpet, prey to something simultaneously indulgent and inconsequential.

Revolutionary Road is maddeningly without being Douglas Sirk. It's middle-class without being *Merchant Ivory*. It's middle class without being *Sideways*. It's suburban American Beauty without the humour. It's 1950s without being *Mad Men*. And it's a musical. Neither Kate Winslet nor Leonardo DiCaprio are convincing dull or old enough to warrant the small-town nightmare marriage they're in. And because we are never told their independent bank stories or their co-dependent love story, you know within the first five minutes exactly how the film

will end. They are shouting and shaming and punching and crying before the title font, leaving the film a road to nowhere, and each performance a fluke rather than an act.

It's hard to make a film about mediocrity interesting, hard to make normality dynamic, hard to enliven your hollow man or empress your little woman. And Saoirse Mendes chooses an aesthetic colour palette of greys and blues and beiges and browns that naturalise – like those two people have been lubricated by the social conventions and clichés of the '50s and by marriage per se. As April, the wife, comes up with the idea to flee their lives by starting a new life in Paris (with their preciously invisible children), you know this will be jeopardised by the husband, Frank, a inevitable promotion. But you will find yourself unable to give a shit.

Where is the universality here? Where are the scars beyond two

selfish human beings who haven't been honest with themselves or each other? Where is the enjoyment beyond rubber necking a commonplace couple's car crash marriage?

There is great potential power in exploring the loneliness of being trapped in a loveless relationship, storm of aspiration, hope, dreams and failure. Desperate to get out, escape to the point of madness and madness is too classic title: a broken link tragedy, but the sense of set piece theatricality sub-*Chelovek sub-Oberon* overrides and makes *Revolutionary Road* two-dimensional, repetitive and didactic. It's like a guest roadside advertisement against ever attempting reason.

There are certain moments of truth which cut through the dinginess of class cynicism, as well as some impactful visual motifs. And the final shot somehow transcends the film itself. In a past

that the film's concluding poem compounds a really questionable dialectic: that poor marriages end in disaster but also beside you if you are still sitting in a bad one when your loving goes. Somehow the acceptable status of the '50s – women either narrow-minded or insane, men trapped by family and responsibility – feels like cavernous gender stereotyping. It's the kind of relationship nihilism that simply makes *Revolutionary Road* a redemptive metaphor for the Peter Pan complex. **Loislan Hayman**

Anticipation: Will Winslet manage to direct a film with a plot? Saoirse let plot film repeat empty look at that? **1**

Engagement: As to a romantic road movie, the ending of the plot goes on, normalised by an understanding feeling. **2**

In retrospect: Winslet's reaction: When that last technical shot of the plot ends the film that ends Winslet's acting journey. **3**

BOOGIE

SCRIPT *Boogie*
by **Greg Kinnear**
by **Simon Pegg**

BOOGIE
by **Greg Kinnear**

Real life rarely feels like a film. But it's never still that a film really feels like life. That's why *Boogie* Murnau's exhilarating drama is so satisfying.

Boogie could scarcely be further removed from the grinding horrors of recent Romanian cinema. Bogdan Boogie Crocunaru is a prosperous furniture designer – part of the modern middle class world – married, with a car, plugged in and wrenched on. He's on holiday with his family when he runs into two friends whose easy-looking life of drinking and women makes Boogie nostalgic for the old times, and at least a little bit thankful of the new. One long night later Boogie has argued with his wife, been out with his mates and said and done a number of things he ought to regret.

And that's about it. It's the sort of film that, in other hands, you'd call a 'romantic drama', and instinctively describe with words like 'intimate' or 'idiosyncratic'. But in truth it's none of those things. And that's because Murnau and his co-writers Rayven Buchescu and Alexandru Balaie have absolutely nailed the rhythms and cadences of real life. They haven't dramatised marriage, they've simply exposed the truth of it on screen. And not a melodramatic 'moral' truth, just the honest observation that it can be damn hard work.

Boogie is a pretty charming, a normal guy who makes mistakes but whose heart is, none-the-less, in the right place. The writers have a brilliantly sympathetic ear for the way he talks – how he expresses himself in silences, banalities and jokes, all of which make something else – Except when they don't.

Murnau toys with depth of field to suggest that there's a world beyond the immediate gaze of Boogie and his friends, while he lightens the tone with the odd sly joke. And if the film does become

frustrating, that's no bad thing. It's only because you want to grab Boogie and shake him – seeing your own faults and feelings mirrored in his. **Matt Bochenko**

Amicus Roman drama is a real sell but it usually is a real sell. **1**

Boogie Surprisingly un-funny but even more surprisingly engaging, honest and beautiful. **1**

In Boogie Murnau proof that Romanian cinema isn't all doom and gloom even if this isn't exactly a land of hope. **1**



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TOKYO SONATA

WRITTEN BY Kiyoko Kurosawa
DIRECTED BY Kiyoko Kurosawa
Akiho Nozaki, Ryo Kasey

GRADE
PG-13

On what looks like a computer screen, a middle-aged company man is abruptly fired from his well-hated Tokyo job. Too ashamed to tell his family, he continues his routine of leaving for work each day, dressed in a suit and tie. While his search for employment founders, his wife and son slowly find their own troubles — unaware of the household's impending financial ruin.

Kiyoko Kurosawa's best known is the 1980 for 1981 horror flick *Pulse*, but the credit-crunch drama of *Tokyo Sonata* is far scarier than any supernatural chiller. There is something unsettlingly close to home about the domestic trials faced by Ryûichi Sasakawa (Tetsuya Nagawa) and his clan. Their fall from



economic stability could happen to any of us, and yet the particular nature of their suffering is uniquely Japanese. It's not the lack of money that threatens the family but rather an honour-bound culture that denies them the strength to confront their problems.

The film's tone is typified by Ryûichi's friend, Kurosawa (Kana Toudô) — another jobless-seer who programs his mobile phone to automatically ring five times each hour. This theatrical gesture usually

seems to be a clichéd running gag, yet it becomes an increasingly sad detail with each repetition. These characters face a situation that borders on the ridiculous, it could almost be funny if it weren't so damn heartbreaking.

And yet Kurosawa refuses to wallow in bleakness. The story he tells is tragic, but it never dissolves into melodrama, achieving a balance that proves to be utterly enthralling. As the youngest of the Sawada, uncovers a musical talent,

the director permits his characters a sliver of hope. His conclusion is neither a funeral hammer blow nor a cup-of-sugar happy ending, but rather a fitting end to a hugely moving drama. **Norm Kelly**

Delicious Winner of the 16th Berlin Regent
Jury Prize & Camera **1**

Delightful Outdoorsy before-and-after the current economic climate **1**

Is Delivered It's just a beautiful experience **1**

VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA

WRITTEN BY Woody Allen
DIRECTED BY Woody Allen
Jennifer Hudson, Jason Schwartzman

GRADE
PG-13

Used as a bar or as an actor *Woody Allen's* thirty-ninth film as writer-director, there's only one reason to watch *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*: Sweeping No Country For Old Men bowl hoochie and killer stare for an open-minded short and designer aesthetic. *Woody Allen's* is the wisest man you've ever seen on screen. He's so damn gorgeous, he almost makes you forget the paper thin clichés of Allen's story. Almost.

On holiday in Barcelona, balanced between Rebecca Hall (lovely but underused) and imperious blonde Scarlett Johansson (beautiful but bland) are charmed up by Barcelona's bohemian Spanish lifestyle.



He's rich, he's witty, he paints, he loves wine, he adores pasta: he wants to shag them both. This being a film, they throw caution to the wind and go to stay with this perfect stranger. Lots of romance and romantic entanglements ensue, but eventually boredom begins to intrude. For the audience, at least.

Then it happens: accident or self-sabotage? One goes on to see of the finest, funniest bubble of

the most magnificent in a long long time. Non-romantic in English roles, superb in Spanish ones, Cruise sets the film on fire every second she's on screen. Between them, Barcelona and Cruise cause friction, making fireworks of passion and jealousy that simply didn't exist in Allen's script. And yes, Cruise does get it on with Johansson. But blink and you'll miss it.

No doubt about it: *Allen's* finest

thousand-year-old is utterly silly, forgettable and predictable. It's also his most purely entertaining film in years. **Jonathan Crocker**

Delicious Woody Allen goes on holiday to Spain *Biggest winner* **1**

Delightful *Barbie and Ken* better than the rest **1**

Is Delivered In this and well were not a Spanish painter, but undeniably very difficult **1**



RACHEL GETTING MARRIED

WRITTEN BY Jonathan Demme
STORY BY Jonathan Demme
SCREENPLAY BY Peter Akiba

CASTING

If you're the type who lets slip the odd sob watching *Don't Tell*, the finale, you might want to apply waterproof mascara before this one, which is likely to leave you a steely-faced, glistening wreck. Such public outpourings are often accompanied by the sneaking suspicion that you've been manipulated, but *Rachel Getting Married* may just make you a believer in the cathartic power of cinema.

Because, though centered on a wedding, this is no chick flick. It documents a few short days in the life of a loving family divided by grief and addiction, exorcising cinematic narrative for an intense, almost home-runs-for-100. The film's

power to move lies in its sudden shifts from tender love to intolerable pain to unrepentant violence and back again. And while wedding moments at times, Jesse Lerner's debut screenplay never feels forced. In fact, it's the relentless persistence of the pain that makes it such an accurate reflection of dysfunctional family life.

That pitch-perfect script is enhanced by Jonathan Demme's spontaneous-style shots are unplanned, scenes unorchestrated and sometimes improvised, while the extensive wedding party is a mixture of professional actors, musicians and friends of the director, united to meet and mingle on set to create

a wedding atmosphere. Against this bohemian backdrop, Anne Hathaway is sublime as the acerbic Kym, a recovering addict fighting hard for her place in the family. Kym is both the product of tragedy and the catalyst for further grief, and while we share her point of view for much of the film, we're also made to sympathize with characters that are diametrically opposed to her.

This neutral/partial perspective is achieved by the freely wandering camera, making it feel at times as though the family are being watched over by a dispassionate third. The days leading up to the beautiful and carefully planned wedding are periodized by fragments of the past,

so that the present somehow contains all the histories, and all the futures, of its participants. Lerner's powers of allusion are deployed so subtly, however, you're quickly made to feel part of this family—a guest at this wedding. Accept the metaphor. Just don't bring your handkerchiefs. **Sally Kohn**

Anticipation: Jonathan Boone and Anne Hathaway. It's a date for a *Philadelphia*-style human drama or *Do Not Disturb* thriller? **B**

Supporting: Unleashed and highly emotional? **B**

In Disregard: A little secondary plot clutter and understated performances. **B**



THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE WEIRD

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE WEIRD

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE WEIRD (R) (PG-13) (PG-13)
Cast: Jung Woo-sung, Lee Byung-hun, Song Kang-ho

When Italian directors borrowed plots and aesthetics from Japanese samurai flicks to put a new spin on American genre epics, the results were known as "spaghetti westerns." But a Korean homage to Sergio Leone's saddle-sagas is what? A noodle western?

A madcap series of fun hijinks through Kim Ji-woon's wild wild West romp, as the director completely ignores the overly measured chills of his immediate homie *A Tale of Two Swords*, and also pulls back from the stick-

up ultraviolence of *A Mercantile Life*. Here a hoarse hunter (Jung Woo-sung), a bandit leader (Lee Byung-hun) and a thief (The Horse's Song Kang-ho) all vie for ownership of the film's titular qualities, while cheating lost treasure in the lawless Manchuera of the 1700s.

Blood and bullets fly faster and redder, optics is snickered, knives are thrown and horses dash across the wide-open plains, but the film's gaudy back-gallop ignores everything. Well, everything apart from

Ji-woon's swooping camerawork and hip-hop set pieces. But beyond that, there's not a lot of story here, or perhaps there's too much, as these three unlikely outer-archetypes double- and triple-cross each other in pursuit of little more than their own shadows.

More than two years in production, the film cost a reported \$17 million, making it the most expensive South Korean movie yet. And, amazingly, the players perform all their own stunts. Though slickly conceived, however,

it remains a less punky and somehow less satisfying affair than Takashi Miike's *Sakigake! Western Gango*—a film that didn't even become a theatrical release in the UK. Money talks. —**Jonathan Olicker**

Jeongjilim *Water* (streaming) (PG) (PG)
in the wild wild West. **B**

Dejagun *Three Men in a Boat* (and more) (PG) (PG)
for repeat. **B**

Jeongjilim *Water* (streaming) (PG) (PG)
in the wild wild West. **B**

WE SPEAK TO KOREAN DIRECTOR KIM JI-WOON TO FIND OUT IF HE'S GOOD, BAD OR JUST PLAIN WEIRO. INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN CROCKER

FILMOGRAPHY KIM JI-WOON

Mr. Go! (2014)
Mr. Go! (2014)
Mr. Go! (2014)
Mr. Go! (2014)
Mr. Go! (2014)
Mr. Go! (2014)
Mr. Go! (2014)
Mr. Go! (2014)

Who would you say are your main influences?

I like fall-in westerns in general but it's clear that Sergio Leone left a strong impression on me. I was inspired not only by westerns, but by films like *Mad Max*, *Death Wish*, *Butch*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *The Wild Bunch* and *Black Runner*. I made this film imagining these films.

What special twist did you want to bring to the western?

I wanted to add a modern touch to the speculative, monstrous and slow made, which were the typical needs of western films. I intended to make an amusing and a enjoyable film even for a young generation today. In doing so, I think spectacular, dramatic action scenes and speed worked.

A Tale of Two Sisters was incredibly reinforced, but *A Silent Sweet Life* and this film are wild and explosive. Which style do you enjoy more? Both sides exist inside myself and I love each one more without preference. It's not sure, but it might be my ideal to make a film combining two contrasting feelings and moods. Or it can also be said that I want to make a film which incorporates extremely different cinematic tones in one film. To name such film among last year's films, *No Country for Old Men* and *Zodiac* can be cited. I also love Robert Rossini film, *Mr. Kurosawa* film and *Hippocampus* by Agnès Varda. Their films are very detailed in their expression but explode in the end with unexpected impact. All these films may have different tones and moods but all of them shock my heart.

The film has a quite a broad streak of black humour. Do you think Korean humour is different to Western humour? Have you found that certain audiences find it easier to relate to the film's sense of humour than others?

When I put humour into films, I usually make it happen in a very dramatic way. In this film, I tried to avoid using a broad or modern Korean humour style. After screenings, I got the impression that the Western audiences understood most of the humour I intended.

Rumours suggested that the film went over schedule and over budget. What can you tell us about that?

The schedule went one-and-a-half months over from what was originally planned. There were two reasons for the delay. One, there was no available data we could collect about the actual shooting schedule. In China three months prior to shooting. We didn't have detailed information about Chinese crews and we had to change major Chinese staff just before location shooting started. I didn't know or expect that such hardships would be there for us. Secondly, I must admit we had a longing to make near-to-perfection scenes, one that made me and my staff want something more and more in the course of filming. This film represents a dramatic desire not only by me but by all the staff to go somewhere no other Korean film had gone before.

See a transcript of this interview online from the week of the film's release.

DEFIANCE

WRITTEN BY David Jenkins
EDITED BY David Jenkins
and John Lee

Hollywood's reactionary nature lends itself to a constant cycle of repression and response. Twenty years ago the suggestion was that the most important issue in global popular culture had failed to adequately address the single most traumatic event of the twentieth century: the Holocaust.

While Spielberg seemed to bury those charges under an avalanche of awards in 1993, for some, Schröder's *List* was just a reiteration of a Jew-as-victim stereotype, a stereotype as old as anti-Semitism itself. Thus, in a range of recent films of varying origin and historical setting, resistance has been made – explicitly or in passing – to Jewish resistance or revenge, from *Black Book* to *The Pianist* and *Murder and Madness*. With *Defiance*, cinema is once

again it seems to make amends.

Based on the true story of the *Beltza* partisans, Jewish resistance fighters who opposed the Nazis while hiding out in the forests of Belarus, *Defiance* strives to be an encapsulation of the issues that confronted European Jews during World War II: it addresses the functioning of individuals within a collective, the meaning of leadership, the justification for violence, and the inherent anti-Semitism amongst 'friendly' Soviet forces and the local population

But these plot strands provide insufficient depth for a film that otherwise remains superficial.

Defiance is a overly theatrical rendering evokes the war films of the 1960s. As such, it does little justice to history instead presenting all sides as archetypes of various stripes via forced dialogue, bad accents and implausibility. The final shootout – and it is just that – is so hackneyed that even Daniel Craig and Liora Schreiber seem uncomfortable. The viewer is left wondering what, exactly was the

point, except to stress that it is important to fight for survival. If that is indeed the message, then does that implicitly assert that for Jews deliverance will must be delivered? Or is that just cynical sound-bait? Either way, defy it and see something else. **James Braxton**

Defiance, Craig Schreiber and Billy Elitz go into it. **B**

Defiance, *Defiance* and *Defiance*. **B**

Defiance, *Defiance* and *Defiance*. **B**

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AUSTRALIA

8/10 **B+** *Top Actress*
2013 *Best Actress* *High*
Actress *Golden Globe*

Cross, camp and contrived, *Australian* indulges the same excesses of director Baz Luhrmann. It's an ungainly mash-mash of sweeping epic, social drama and outback adventure that sees an English toff (Nicole Kidman) shack up with Crocodile Dundee (Hugh Jackman) and an Aboriginal lad (Brandon Walters), while herding cattle and witnessing the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific.

What's most surprising about *Australia* is how much of the simple stuff goes wrong. The script is awful (some of the four writers cracked it), the cinematography is over-the-top (there are half a dozen helicopter shots, but nothing you haven't seen

before) and there's an overabundance of terrible CGI, especially in the use of digital backdrops that look like they were knocked up by the week-experience boy because nobody else could be bothered. Then there's the problem: it's a tone that veers from the absurd (Nicole Kidman's entire performance) to the kitsch to the downright campy. And for a film that's proudly PC about Aboriginal culture, it's fun to see the racial stereotyping packed on to everyone else.

As a director, Luhrmann doesn't possess the seriousness that the film requires. His vision of grandeur is only ever a hair's breadth away from collapsing into giggles. It's as if he's intimidated by the vast canvas of the material, and rather than own his game, he's decided to lower the tone. As a result, *Australia* is never allowed to cash in its emotional chips.

In a film this long, however, the law of averages suggests that some things will go right. Hugh Jackman is good value as Dundee.

— ripped, meticulous and regally gorgeous — while Brandon Walters is a real find. But make no mistake: this is a Christmas turkey. To honour one of Australia's favourite phrases: oh, eh? **Danny Fong**

Antipasto *David Gorder* meets *Star Wars* **B+**

Equipment *Only Jackman and Walters shine* **C**

In Disguise So bad it might become a cult classic **D**



WHO KILLED NANCY?

8/10 **B+** *Best Actor*
2013 *Best Actor* *High*
Actor *Golden Globe*

8/10 **B+** *Best Actor*

John and Yoko, Kurt and Courtney, Sid and Nancy — being the girlfriend of an icon can be a tough online. But if *Who Killed Nancy?* sounds like a detailed investigation into the murder of a young woman who happened to be one of the most controversial progenies of all time, be warned. It's not *Insane*. Alan G. Parker's documentary aims to clear the name of Sid Vicious, long the fall guy for his girlfriend Nancy Spungen's death in 1978. She was found in a hotel room clad in black lingerie with a single stab wound lacerating her abdomen.

There's something about this junkie love story that keeps people coming back for more. Part investigation documentary and part fan biography, *Who Killed Nancy?* can't help but be winning. Although Alan G. Parker's direction



at times is a little confused, his interviews offer a genuine insight into the macabre fascinations of a man who named himself after his most unlikely trait.

What is lacking from the film is a decent explanation for the venomous feeling *Insane* Nancy provokes. If Vicious was simply a drug-addled musician then it's unclear why Spungen was such a figure of hate. In the years since her death, those who knew the couple have vividly described their dislike

of Spungen, and many have now celebrated her demise. Given that Nick Broomfield's *Alan G. Courtney* managed an interrogation into Courtney Love with little more than a monitor and a prayer, it would have been nice to see Parker's research stretch a little further.

However, being left wanting to know more is not necessarily a bad thing. What the film does reveal is that, like any great rock myth, the questions surrounding this murder was unlikely to cease with the closing

credits. But like all good movies, it's not so much the ending that counts more the way you tell it. **Adam Cosme**

Antipasto *It doesn't do much except what it should* **B**

Equipment *Alan does just find best testimonials from disparate figures Parker paints a portrait of the many sides of punk* **B**

In Disguise *Who killed Nancy? Who was Nancy? Why did she die? Perhaps there were signs questions that went unanswered* **D**



VALKYRIE

BRITISH FILMMAKER
BRYAN SINGER
ON HIS NEW FILM
VALKYRIE

CRUISE
AND
SINGER

"Only God can judge us now," says Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg. But then, von Stauffenberg didn't live to see the internet. How do you approach a film like *Valkyrie*? Do you pretend not to have heard the endline chatter? The bad buzz? Do you politely ignore the release date changes? Because make no mistake this film was meant to be awful. Tom Cruise as a Nazi? What else could be lining to the role except inevitable failure?

Von Stauffenberg is one of the few German heroes of World War II. He led a group of high-ranking officers in a daring plot to assassinate Hitler and take control of Berlin. The plan was to blow up the Führer in his bunker, blame the attack on an SS coup-seeker, communicate to the outside world and put Operation Valkyrie into effect, a standing order that would give the national guard the authority to arrest control of key areas, while the plotters quietly installed a revolutionary government that would end the war.

What happens, then, for the all-

American Cruise to appropriate — no, steal! — this role for himself... And especially at a time when the Germans themselves have been knocking out superior, solvent war films, from *Dunkirk* to *The Counterjumper*. They have the infrastructure, the talent and the right, what does Tom Cruise have? The name and the checkbook. For over a year now the lines have been sharpened. *Valkyrie* was so bad, so doomed, so utterly ill-conceived that it was going to destroy Cruise, bring down United Artists and leave Scientology itself in ashes. It may well be responsible for the credit crunch, too.

But this narrative bypasses two things. The first is that the director, Bryan Singer, is a past master of edge-of-the-seat filmmaking. The second, more controversially, is that Tom Cruise is a tremendously charismatic movie star and an actor of proven pedigree. Put the two of them together and what do you think you're going to get?

A disaster? Well, no, sorry. *Valkyrie* may not be awards bait but

it is a solid, at times gripping, thriller that wrings every ounce of drama out of what is, at heart, a pulping tale of the courage and audacity of some undone by the cowardice and politics of others.

There are, of course, problems — most obviously with the casting. The German high command is a *Who's Who* of British thespians including Kenneth Branagh, Tom Wilkinson, Terence Stamp, Bill Nighy and Jeremy Irons. It's as if an elite RADA class has been taken hostage by the Nazis. But the filmmakers do their best to make us past the discordance between what we're seeing and what we're hearing. In a near tick, the film begins with the German 'Waltz' (marching line) *Valkyrie*, while Cruise begins his undercover in German before switching to English in the most elegant of solutions, but it works if you're prepared to take a leap of imagination.

At its best, *Valkyrie* is an expertly assembled and tightly edited real-time (the waging of the attack is a dramatic masterstroke)

although Singer is a little too wedded to the glossy sheen of his blockbuster work. He's a little too slick, a little too polished and oddly coquettish. Hitler is approached obliquely. Singer's vision of the Führer in his eyrie at Berchtesgaden surrounded by his henchmen lacks punch — like something Edward Hopper might have painted if the Nazis had won the war.

And Cruise? Cruise is... Cruise. Commanding, focused, energetic, projecting a performance that manages — just — to get beyond the costume that clothes but doesn't confine him. There's also a real focus in watching him take a bullet. Really, why, though, is something everyone will have their own answer for. **Mark Blackbeard**

Delightful. Eye had hurt. A German-themed *Blitz* as enjoyable as just as impossible vision is all though! **B**

Engaging. *Valkyrie* is a solid old-fashioned action yarn with plenty of war tactics and twists. **B**

In Berghof. Don't believe the hat hype. **B**



SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

BY NICK SPINAK

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE
CASTING BY PAUL WILKINSON
FROM INDIA

India's Bollywood film machine is colossal. Here in Hollywood, it's often easy to forget the industry's sheer reach, mesmerizing millions of people throughout the subcontinent. In truth, there's often not a lot to these films—scenarios that rely on formulaic plot lines and recurring themes of love, honor, and revenge. Yet such is the insatiable appetite for Indian film that weighty works often fail to get a look in, leaving some of the greater Indian films to be made by émigrés like the Canada-based Deepa Mehta or, in the case of *Slumdog Millionaire*, some British director Danny Boyle.

Shot on location around Mumbai, and using several local actors, the extraordinary drama is his most ambitious work to date. It opens with starlet Dev Patel (British Asian actor

Dev Patel) one question away from winning the top prize of 20 million rupees on the Indian version of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* The show's host, Prem Kumar (Anil Kapoor), cash accepts that a 'slumdog' is intelligent enough to know the answers and, when the show runs out of time and breaks overnight, he has Malik arrested and sent off to the police station, accused of cheating.

Over the course of his interrogation, Jamal explains how he came to know the answers, it turns out that each question is linked to key periods in his often horribly deprived childhood. It's a clever narrative device, exploring what it's like to be a Muslim slave kid in modern-day Mumbai. Indeed, the film captures the ambiguities and ironies of a contemporary India grappling both the modern and traditional.

So we learn about Jamal's life as a child orphan (orphan?) in a call center, his mother's death at the hands of Hindu extremists, and see his brother Salim (Madhur Mittal) land into a life of violence. Add to the mix Boyle's gritty footage of the slum-infested, rubbish-clogged slum, plus Jamal and Salim being exploited as child beggars by a corrupt orphanage owner, and it's a potent snapshot of India's social malaise.

But there's an secondary plot, Jamal's love interest, childhood sweetheart Latika (Priyanka Chopra) Lost and then found, Latika ties together the film's different worlds. But at the same time, it's as though two films have been layered on top of each other: one epic drama, the other a triumph-over-odds love story. And it's that fluffy love story that wins out

in the end, the film deciding to crash in on a Bollywood happy ending complete with choreographed dance scenes as the credits roll.

So even with its slick editing, stirring visuals and a catchy soundtrack from AR Rahman and M.I.A., it's a movie that ultimately decides to be a feel-good fantasy about destiny and nothing more. You decide if that's a bad thing, or not. **Ed Glaister**

Anticipation OK, getting that private man transfer kept strange but is this of this film to watch? **C**

Equipment Just some random history this film right here is gonna make another place **C**

It's Intrepid The ending itself, just that of a punch **C**

DANNY BOYLE: NATIONAL HERO. INTERVIEW BY MATT BOCHENSKI

FILMOGRAPHY DANNY BOYLE

Shallow Grave (1995)
Trainspotting (1996)
Boys n the Trains (1997)
28 Days Later (2002)
No Reservations (2003)
A Simple Plan (2005)
Trainspotting 2 (2007)
Submarine (2010)

Danny Boyle is wearing a suit. It's a slick, shiny suit — shiny gray and kind of retro space age. He looks a bit like a game show host, which is fitting, as Boyle is in London for the festival premiere of his new film, which hinges on an episode of India's *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*

Not that there's anything wrong with wearing a suit. It's just that Boyle has never seemed the type. Since bursting onto the scene with *Shallow Grave* in 1995, Boyle has always seemed looser going. He's unpredictable, slightly ragged, a bit of a rascal. It's easy to imagine him as Ranson in the opening scene of *Trainspotting*. His whole career has been a kind of mad dash, big gun on his back, going every second.

For all that his CV boasts only eight features, Boyle has proven himself to be a restless and energetic filmmaker. He's British cinema's great chameleon, morphing from indie darling to commercial player, working with Leo DiCaprio and Cameron Diaz (admittedly with mixed success), before making a couple of pitch-perfect genre hits (*28 Days Later*, *Snowden*) interspersed with a deftly executed indie film (*Submarine*), and now *Sliding Doors*, a film that sits somewhere between the comic excess of *Trainspotting* and the earnest address of *A Life Less Ordinary*.

Maybe it's mood still for a minute and really mixed some of the genres, he's typed with. He's got all the tools to become a home or reference-film guy, but, he says, that kind of repeat performance simply isn't in his nature. "I think it's about keeping yourself fresh," says Boyle. "When you approach a script and you know how to do it, that's not that exciting. It's when you don't know how to do it that it's really, really exciting. It's a real juxtaposition, anyway, that to often as heavily you've got to, to a degree, not know what you're doing."

Boyd, he says, "I think the problem is the audience. They're much more impatient than they ever used to be, and they're much more impatient. If you go back to the time you don't, they're bored. And I can feel it because I'm an audience member as well — I go all the time to the cinema, and I want to see you take risks, and I want to see you fail and stumble. I don't want to see it perfected."

If the key to great cinema is risk-taking, then *Sliding Doors* was pre-designed to be a classic. The story of "what would Janet Mock (Dev Patel), whose appearance on the Indian version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* puts the stage for a sweeping tale of life in the rapidly changing country, was fraught with potential pitfalls. It's anything, it's an act of hubris on Boyle's part. Who does he think he is, strutting into this stadium of a billion people, dozens of languages and a rich history, and looking out an

expensive cultural table — telling their story in his words? "It does require a lot of balls," he admits. "Common sense would tell you that there's no way to do it successfully because you're a white guy, but the confidence and the belief I had for it outweighed common sense. I remember going there on the first trip and just saying, 'I thought, 'Oh fuck. I can't just let it. Let's do it.'"

It helped that Boyle is now an older and wiser filmmaker than the relatively inexperienced 44-year-old who last took a production team overseas, to make *The Beach*. "The Beach was an example of the way not to do something," says Boyle. "We took hundreds of people who were all on an absolute blinder because it was three months in Thailand, per diem, two days off a week, luxury hotel, paradise island, the world's biggest star right in orbit. Whenever on this we took 10 people, that was it."

Patience, calm and unflinching, *Sliding Doors* is at a point with Boyle's early, anarchic genre. And yet it's as singular as the environment that created it. Indie or bandit country for filmmakers. They Do Things Differently" is probably the polite way of putting it. "It's staggeringly fucking ahead," is probably more accurate. But Boyle was quick to add another, after all, it's not like he had a choice. "You don't go around going, 'Fucking hell, I'm British, come here all you lot,'" he says. "You have to kind of absorb yourself in it. And there are happy moments where you think, 'Oh my god, I'm not going to get anything done,' you know? But you've gotta trust it, you can't panic, you've gotta trust it and keep calm, and it comes back to you eventually. And it's just beyond what you could ever hope for." The key, he believes, was to stay loose. "All the things you normally have as a director, which is control, forget it — you're not going to get it. You've gotta go with it, abandon control and see what you get. Sometimes you don't even know what you'll get but I remember thinking, 'Don't get mad. Maybe we haven't got it. Don't get mad. Maybe we haven't got it... but maybe we have.'"

The headspun, now it, is simply evidenced by the fact that *Sliding Doors* exploded out of nowhere at Toronto to become a massive word-of-mouth hit. But for all that Boyle has since taken the film to festivals around the world, it's obvious that he's not been able to shake all the affect that India has had on her just yet. "You're never going to get under it, it's, it teaches you that way, very quickly — you're only going to get a glimpse," he admits. "But it does affect you. In accepting things, you learn to go beyond them as well. It's weird. I feel like such a wanker saying it, but there's something about it that is a very powerful thing."

Head editor from the week of release for the full transcript



FAR NORTH

DIRECTED BY Jørgen Leth
STARRING Søren Malling
Søren Malling, Michelle Yeoh

GRADE
PG-13

Some four years in the making, and by all accounts an arduous and demanding shooting experience, *Far North* marks a turning point in a more personal form of cinema for director Jørgen Leth. Having followed up his sparse and lovingly recorded somers down *The Winner* with an unlikely excursion into Hollywood with Sarah Michelle Gellar remake *The Hours*, Kapadia and producer Bernard Fawcett searched long and hard for a project that would ignite their creative fires.

The spark was a deliberately lean short story by Søren Malling the kernel of which is a dark and quietly epic tale set in the harsh beauty of the Arctic. Adapted by Kapadia and writer Tim Miller (for North country-romances-are-as-Sass (Michelle Yeoh) and Anja (Michelle Yeoh)) two women struggling to survive on the frozen wastes. The impending threat of menacing soldiers comes on taking over their land forces the pair into an even

more desolate environment—a remote island seemingly adrift from all other human life. One day, however, a figure, Leth (Sean Bean) appears on the ice, close to death and collapses. Despite her initial fears and reservations about allowing this intruder to penetrate their isolation, Søren saves Leth and helps nurse him back to health. Aware of the competition for his affections, Leth ultimately forms a passionate connection with Anja, leaving Søren lonely, jealous, and deluded. When the new lovers announce their plans to leave for a life together, a desperate Søren acts with terrifying and tragic consequences.

With *The Winner* representing the East and *Far North* the North, the film marks the second part in a planned series of collaborations between Kapadia and Miller covering the four points of the compass. A direct lineage is also maintained with Kapadia resuming the helm of the cinema produced

that made his debut such an unlikely experience and one of the standout works in recent British cinema. Alongside Miller and Fawcett these collaborations include cinematographer Norman Gies, editor Riva J. Lind and composer Dario Marianelli. Set on the stunning archipelago of Svalbard, the furthestest Northern settlement in the world, as well as on the Arctic mainland of Norway, this sparse and crisply composed variation on Don Siegel's *The Big Game* is a frequently exhilarating work that offers a relatively rare glimpse into a world and a way of life rarely depicted on screen.

Again indulging the love of folk tales that informed *The Winner*, this time around events take a darker and perhaps more complex turn with the story unfolding not in wilderness but with Søren, carrying out a horrific deed which fulfills the curse that the shaman pronounced when she was born. *Far North* makes sensibly ambiguous, with the

relationship between Søren and Anja left deliberately opaque. It is never made clear if the older woman and younger woman are mother and child, sisters, cousins or even lovers. What is apparent is that they need one another to stay alive and that everything changes when Leth comes into their lives. Eyebrows have been raised at the seemingly incongruous casting of Sean Bean, but he brings considerable presence to the part, offering a disquieting mix of innocence and enigma as he plays the precocious union of Søren and Anja's mentor Jason Wood.

Antipathetic. *The Winner* heralded a major new talent, but *Far North* tells *The Winner* was a disappointment. **C**

Engaged. Crisp and intelligent, Kapadia builds from a simple premise into a compelling narrative. **B**

In the end. It brilliantly composed and delicately shrewdly narrates from the eye of Søren's poignant tale. **B**

ROLE MODELS

REUNION OF THE TWO
STARS OF THE 1950S
THEY WERE THE MOST
FAMOUS OF THE 1950S
THEY WERE THE MOST
FAMOUS OF THE 1950S

It might surprise you to know that *Judd* Agnew has nothing to do with *Role Models*. The casting of Paul Rudd, Elizabeth Banks and Christopher Mintz-Plasse (*Superbad*'s McLovin), not to mention the film's snappy script, may compare to give that impression, but *Role Models* cuts under the license that has afflicted Agnew's troupe in recent films to deliver a surprisingly funny and warm comedy.

Rudd and Sean William Scott play Danny and Wheeler, two underachieving thirty-somethings scraping a living shilling energy drinks to school kids. Following a break with the law, the pair are forced to do community

service, acting as big brother mentors to two problem kids (Mintz-Plasse and scene-stealing newcomer Bobby Thompson). Will the quirky lads teach Danny and Wheeler responsibility and humility? Will Danny's estranged girlfriend come back to him as a result? Will Seller get laid? If you're unsure of the answers, then you're watching the wrong film.

Although *Role Models* does offer some broad sex comedy staples, its funniest moments are in its loose

way retuned (though bad-mouthed) dialogue and silly jokes. Rudd, who shares a winning candor, has obviously learned from the mistakes of some of the Agnew acolytes. Gone are the laboured improvisation, quirky camera and meandering plot lines of films like *Private Practice*. Agnew, in exchange for a well-structured and satisfying romantic comedy. Yes, the charming *Barbershop* cut in a thankless role as Danny's girl, and yes, there are the usual adolescent-obsessions with American pop culture, but *Role*

Models matches the lightweight fun of *The 40 Year Old Virgin* in that it gives you a few belly laughs, allows you to feel for its characters, and sends you out with a smile on your face. **Don Stewart**

Agnew: Another Agnew knock-off? **1**

Agnew: Is it like the Agnew knock-off? **1**

Is Agnew, Agnew don't make with Agnew Agnew and don't watch **1**



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ANVIL! THE STORY OF ANVIL

By Dave Karger

ANVIL BY Dave Karger
SHIRAZI: Jeff Goss
Left: Steve Lipson

If you were to apply Darwin's theory of natural selection to the world of heavy metal, the result would play pretty much like *Anvil! The Story of Anvil*. Taking as its starting point a 1984 tour in which the eponymous band shared the stage with the likes of Bon Jovi and Whitesnake, Sacha Gervasi's documentary catches up with them as they something (juggling metal jobs with keeping the rock dreams alive). Because while their metal contemporaries get paid, *Anvil* just let die.

Despite the *Spinal Tap* comparisons and the nagging feeling that they must be having fun on *Anvil!* as a documentary not a mockumentary, Gervasi was a reader for the Canadian band back in his teens, and after a career

that's included writing Spinal Tap's *The Terminal*, he's decided to catch up with core members Steve Lipson, Kadoh, and Robb Diamond as they try to resurrect the band after a series of cheaply produced albums.

According to the idea of Lenny and Slick, *Anvil* were a massive influence on metal. But after watching footage of Lipson hitting the stage in bondage gear and doing a guitar solo with a dildo (comedy value aside) it's understandable that they didn't make it to *Tip of the Figs*. But quite how it went so wrong is a mystery to all concerned.

Not that they're about to follow in self pity. Lipson insists optimistically that "it can never be worse than it already is"—a reason for chucking on if ever there was one. Still, it's heartwarming to see them play to

small back room audiences even more so when Lipson says he sometimes closes his eyes on stage and imagines the massive audiences of years gone by.

Anvil is hilarious and painful by turns, much like *Spinal Tap*, but with the added pathos of knowing these guys are real. A tour of Eastern Europe distracted in the first months as unpaid gigs, missed trains and despair—an album recording nearly took Robb to quit the band. Lipson's at times to earn cash for his family results in nothing but humiliation.

Lipson and Robb have been ardently pursuing fame, if not fortune, for 35 years, and it's hard to say whether their devotion to hitting the big time is inspiring or worryingly delusional. Perhaps it's a touch of both.

Gervasi stays well out of the documentary—his fondness for the band apparent but not overbearing. He's not out to take the piss, but because he doesn't ignore *Anvil*'s faults. One thing is for sure: he's going to get there, in front of their biggest audience for years, albeit in the comfort of the cinema. **Score: B+.**

Antipater: Who are *Anvil*? What do they do? **TV: 4/5.**

Samuel: Are these guys for real? Highly amusing and genuinely touching. Early on makes comparisons to *Spinal Tap*. **TV: 4/5.**

It's a tragedy: Despite all of its moments *Anvil* is a touching portrait of musical ambition. Perhaps it's time to become a classic in its own right. **TV: 4/5.**

HANNAH TAKES THE STAIRS

WORTH A STAIR (and looking down) Gena Davis, Mark Ruffalo, Jeffrey Tambor

COMEDY

Twenty-something Hannah (Gena Davis) floats in and out of love with two men over a post-graduate summer. She has an illness, which results in chronic dissatisfaction with her relationships. In *Almost Famous: The Stairs*, the latest slab of lo-fi romanticism, we follow her troubles as she aims to fall in love with the right guy.

Shot without a script, this scenario allows the actors to flex their improv muscles to varying degrees, which adds greatly to the film's sense of reality. Director Joe Swanberg strips his characters

until they are both sexually and emotionally naked. The constant use of extreme close-ups makes for intimate cinema at its most exposing.

The film's weakness, though, lies in the fact that the characters' problems simply don't warrant much sympathy. Hannah, played with veer and enthusiasm by Davis, fluctuates uncontrollably between happiness and despair,

forever unsure what she wants. Despite her breathtaking performance, however, the film fails to deliver what it says on the tin. It seems to be quickly funny but struggles to deliver much in the way of amusement.

Almost Famous: The Stairs has something of the vibe of Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It*, a feminist critique on the impotency of men and the empowerment of women. Or

Swanberg's film is reaching towards that, but you wouldn't honestly say it gets there. **Markus Dancy**

Anticipation: *MovieLine* is yesterday's hit #117 **D**

Disappoint: It may be stylish but great insight slides from the video and off the film **D**

In Bedragled: *Director* is claiming director is tonight **D**

GARDENS IN AUTUMN

WORTH A GARDEN (and looking down) Gena Davis, Mark Ruffalo, Jeffrey Tambor

COMEDY

In a highly amusing opening scene, a couple of old men butter over the quality and dimensions of their caskets in a coffin shop. In these few moments, *Garden in Autumn* wisely introduces us to its central concerns regarding the folly of human ambition and non-rational materials. What follows are two meandering hours of variations on these themes which, even when they fix with humour and driftings visual metaphors, still feel like a drip-drip, diluted version of the punchy prolog.

The plot – of which, by design, there isn't much to speak – involves avaricious Vincent (Steven Blanchett), a scoundrel ousted from his role of life and privilege by his popular, life-passing to negotiate his change of lifestyle with bumbling

chaos, another less-than-lower lover to another, now dependent on mistresses who once clung to his status, as well as his sexually bilious "journal" (Michael Piccolo), a quasi-Molotov incestuous memoir.

Neither is Vincent without his quirks, which include standing on his head in moments of anxiety (a trope ingeniously echoed in a later shot of a set of mechanical figurines). Such idiosyncrasies are all very well, while the non-specific setting underscores *Garden*'s characteristically indolent style

as do the ubiquitous animals – from the caged toucan which passes between grey-robed baronesses, to the purring leopard found loitering in the corridors of power.

Classic themes of the inescapable cycle of life and aftermath of fortune are at the crux of the film, and *Garden* enjoys poking fun at the absurdity of humankind for trying to swim against the tide. No doubt there is a horticultural cross-reference to be traced from the farcical closing line of *Vulture's Candidate*: "If you could

move garden," *Garden*'s meandering grounds could do with a little pruning, but, hey, one person's weed is another's wildflower. **Sophia Jones**

Anticipation: *Frankie* Georges' other *Garden* has a bit of a bit **D**

Disappoint: It's a much more good in its world – a lot of attention to detail, but there's still fun to be had **D**

In Bedragled: A difficult position for them occurred in their movie, but there's no denying the film is a classic **D**



LAURENT CANTET TEACHES US A THING OR TWO ABOUT HIS FILMS. INTERVIEW BY JAMES BRAMBLE

FILMOGRAPHY LAURENT CANTET

The Class (2007)
Headshot (2008)
Incendies (2010)
Jeune Femme (2015)
In September (2017)

Laurent Cantet's films are about power, the system, money and human attachment. In *Headshot*, he portrayed the sensitive subject of male "escorts" in the Third World and their exploitation by rich, middle-aged Western women. In *Incendies*, he explored vice: the conflict between a working-class father and his managerial son — the political in the personal — and in *Jeune Femme*, he portrayed a seemingly prosperous businessman whose wife working like an addict is in pursuit of conformity.

"Probably what's at the heart is that a lot of systems do not take into account the individual in the whole scheme of things," he says. "It's true that a lot of my films are based on the characters often finding themselves confronted by the power of an individual within the system or society that doesn't always take into account the individual's need."

In his most recent film, *The Class*, Cantet dives into the explosion of tensions that bubble in France's suburbs — issues of identity, race and language — given extra poignance by the experience of a group of mostly confident and vocational adolescents. It's a subject that seems almost impossible to capture without controversy or distortion. But *The Class* is pitch-perfect.

Cantet, whose parents were teachers, frames the film as a teacher's infernal journey: one of the word "glosses" (translated as "lectures") to describe two female students. Is there an intentional link with Barthes's politically charged use of the word "glosses" (noun or "gloss"), to describe racism?

"No," he denies, "it's not a direct link but what I wanted to show was how much a choice of a word can have very decisive consequences. In

terms of the word "glosses," it has its particular situation because it's a word that has changed meaning. For me, the people of my generation, it's really not a very serious word, an insult."

The game is also divided between the meaning and interpretation of language is at the heart of *The Class*. "Language is really the thread because it's around the word and the misunderstanding of the word that drama emerges," agrees Cantet. "It's not a happy coincidence that school is the place where we go to acquire tools, tools that enable us to function in the world. The most necessary and efficient tool possible is quite clearly language in terms of helping you to integrate."

The Class deals explicitly with the difficulties one African student, Souleymane, faces in integrating, and the different responses he draws from the school's teachers. The debate about Souleymane serves as a portrayal of the conflict between "here" and "over there" in France. "What I was interested in is that how it is a debate that lived," says Cantet. "We're not in some ideological situation — it is a debate of people who are searching, looking for things."

And that, for Cantet, seems to be the unifying theme of his work, that while his sympathies are firmly (here) such arguments are only of value in their practice. "In some outskirts, kids want to belong to certain communities who at the same time don't want them. The questions that we bring into the film are things that really happen. We should be questioning society: we don't want to have a big explosion."

This interview will be available online in full from the week of release.



THE CLASS

CLASS
REVIEW

BY STEVE KATZ
CRITERIA: *Must-See*

With its fundamentalist snarl for the tender purity of la République, France is a particularly fascinating miscegenation of issues of identity and race. Its proto-nationalism with regard to retaining laïcité-cultural exports can be seen as having overtly political overtones, the actions of a country struggling with its shadow identity. In this context, language and image become the battleground for exclusion and assimilation—insulating the power plays inherent in received modes of behavior and expression.

France is the home of semantics—the study of the power of words—and there is surely no coincidence

that a country which places such importance on high art should also produce philosophers drenched with the repressive qualities of language. Ironically, such theories of language could never write clearly, so much of what the world over would do well to screen *The Class*.

Playing himself in Laurent Cantet's adaptation of his autobiography, François Bégaudeau is a young French teacher in an inner-city comprehensive. Attempting to assert authority over his unruly class, he insists on unflinching attention and respect while internally engaging with the students as individuals. In this way

he allows his students to lead the discussion into areas of relevance to their lives and misgivings of identity and significance. But when François lets this freely balanced informality verge on anarchy, his fragile authority is undermined, jeopardizing his job.

Despite a relative lack of narrative, *The Class* is mesmerizing for the simple pleasure of witnessing the students opening their way with unfiltered innocence, through the things that matter to them—film music and football to race and language. Ultimately, the film stresses that the meaning of words is of far more than academic importance.

Shot with an impenetrable cast who were given freedom to improvise, the film has an unrequited sense of realism—that this is a fleeting glimpse into a rarely examined world. Despite its honest portrayal of the profession as overlooked and underappreciated, you may even leave the cinema wanting to teach. **James Brinkley**

Anticipation: Cantet has done some striking work and this one was his Prime (10)

Epiphany: Convinced not nearly as fast (8)

In Retrospect: A truly excellent hidden gem (9)



FROST/NIXON

WILLIAM BROOKS
SHEEN, PETER MAGUIRE
FROST, LANGLEY, SEAN PENN

FRANK
LANGLEY

In the summer of 1977, 65 million people tuned in to see a British talk show host attempt to evolve from his Hello, good evening and welcome presentational style to get a confession from disgraced former President Richard Nixon. The result was one of our airwaves' battle that redefined David Frost's career and forced the infamous Watergate scandal, taking Nixon with it.

Based on the play by Peter Morgan, director Ron Howard's interpretation hangs on the question of whether either man, fueled by vanity and arrogance, can pull off an amazing and unpredictable coup. For Frost, the goal was to salvage what's left of his flagging

career, while Nixon believes that if he can get the American people back on side he may be able to return to the White House.

Often when a hit play or musical is transferred to the big screen, producers buckle under the pressure of market expectations and cut bigger and more audience-friendly stars. Thankfully this is not the case here, as both Michael Sheen and Sean Penn Langley reprise their roles from the West End and Broadway productions, and their ease and familiarity with the characters shows.

Sheen manages to capture Frost's mannerisms and vocal inflections while steering clear

of parody, and Langley's Nixon is slow, calculating and smothering, clearly enjoying how uncomfortable his opposing partner is. Clinging to the knowledge of his own power, Nixon attacks Frost up with inappropriate questions ("Did you fart once last night?") and off-the-cuff comments. Matthew Macfadyen, Oliver Platt and Kevin Bacon headline strong support, but it's Sean Penn who gets the best lines as the Army vet who vilifies Nixon behind his back but improbably sympathetic to his face.

Although we know exactly how it ends, the build up to the final interview is deftly handled and the tension evoked by

the desperation of both men is unrelenting. When Nixon finally takes the bait and essentially admits his guilt before the world, there's no sense of victory for justice, or even Frost (at a final shot of an American anti-hero looking over the sea, alone and in the shadows). Most surprising of all, you may even feel a twinge of sympathy. Whether or not Nixon warrants it, this drama definitely deserves a look. **Letterman Select**

Outtakes: A truly political drama. **D**

Equipment: This battle of wits is compelling stuff. **B**

In Rehearsal: Is Nixon today as tense as he is **D**

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BETTER THINGS

MOVIE
REVIEW

BETTER THINGS (R) stars Sophie
Winkleman, David
Wool, and
John
Hewitt

Recent pop culture would have it that heroin went out of fashion along with *Trainspotting*. *Better Things* is a reminder that, chic or not, many youngsters in rural England can't quite lock the habit. Following two promising shorts, director David Winkleman has produced an ambitious, if flawed, feature debut.

In the opening scene, the camera glides over the pallid corpse of a young addict, needle in rigor mortised hand, slumped on an unremarkable sofa in an unremarkable suburban living room. It looks like a particularly stylized '90s anti-drug campaign ad. And though not the desired



effect, it's hard to shake the cinematic once-established

That said, the film has a powerful, impressionistic style. Scenes are shot in soft-focus, disorienting close-up or at an equally stifling distance, revealing the subtle, indifferent landscape. The young protagonist-drive down country lanes at dizzying speed but encounter nothing in their path. But it seems—as an empty road.

Though the drug-themed inevitably drags, multiple narratives include a young agnostic and declining grandparents the middle generation is proudly elated, spanning the spectrum of hopelessness and doomed escapism. But these feel like a consistently bleak mosaic of shots, which somehow doesn't constitute a whole.

Though a trained photographer and artist, Winkleman has overlooked a much-needed sense of light as well as dark. **Sophie Winkleman**

Anticipation: First feature from a bright young Brit, set in the Cotswolds or here. **B**

Upshot: Not exactly a fast drive movie. **B**

In Yiddish: An impressive debut in a collection of better things to come. **B**

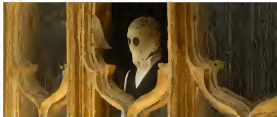
FRANKLYN

MOVIE
REVIEW

FRANKLYN (R) stars Ryan
Reynolds, Saoirse
Ronan, and
John
Hewitt

It's not often you see this kind of London in British science-fiction. All the more impressive, then, that this is director Gerald McMorrow's debut feature. *McMorrow* has recruited an impressive international cast including *Carroll* star Saoirse Ronan and *Heavenly Creatures* star Saoirse Ronan. *Frankly* is a sci-fi story. Slipping between a alive-colored present-day London and a neon-lit future metropolis where religion has run amok, *McMorrow* displays a deftness of touch and breadth of imagination that will leave viewers disoriented along the way.

Left standing at the altar, wannabe Milo (Saoirse Ronan) seems to be taking it all in his stride—



until he begins to glimpse his old childhood sweetheart Sally (Saoirse Ronan) around town. Finding Sally and recognizing what the y once had quickly becomes a mission for Milo. Meanwhile, gothic upstart art student Rinska (also played by Saoirse Ronan) hates on her muse and reality therapy while indulging in increasingly dangerous art projects. And elsewhere is the flamant *McMorrow*-Cory married vigilante athlete Jonathan

Pratt (Ryan Reynolds) attempts to attain his own individuality in an overwhelmingly oppressive environment that forces Pratt on its terms, however he means to leave.

Refusing to conform sets Pratt on a treacherous path that pits all four characters together. Meanwhile City and London begins to blur, along with the boundaries between imagination and reality. But the sprawling plot lines slowly weave together with real decency, resulting

in a payoff that's as unexpected as it is satisfying. A cracking sci-fi brainiac John Dunning

Anticipation: Great cast and entirely original plot. We're hooked. **B**

Upshot: The *Frankly* plot is too dense at times, but excellent performances and FX eye candy put you through the climax. **B**

In Yiddish: Pretty nothing more than one to evaluate the legs and timing. **B**



MILK

BACKSTORY Gus Van Sant
 starring Sean Penn
 about Harvey Milk

**WORTH
 WATCHING**

He may be the "Greatest American Actor of his Generation," but given the wrong material Sean Penn can occasionally end up doing Sean Penn, doing Sean Penn performing.

On paper Milk looks like the right material: Gay Van Sant's aesthetically beguiling has all the hallmarks of elegant mainstream gay dir. Here is a man (Penn) who turns up in New York in 1990, is unsettled with life, meets a younger lover called Scott (James Franco), moves to San Francisco, becomes a gay rights activist and a city supervisor (the first openly gay elected official in the state) and is then brutally slain by a disgruntled colleague. Dan

Wiele (a soft, mesmerizing turn from Josh Brolin). None of it is not a spoiler for non-Milk observers, as the film flags up the assassination, via flashback, in the first five minutes.

Thus the Harvey Milk story should have you alternately weeping on the sides and punching the air in triumph. And yet, maybe it's because Van Sant and his novice writer Dustin Lance Black were so keen to truthfully narrate the life that they forgot to dramatically define the man. Hence we get all five of Milk's consecutive and increasingly similar election bids (four failures, one success). We get two speeches (another apocryphal), one rally, several parties and one campaign to

remove dog shit from public parks. All true, yes, but eventually weeping in their relentless honesty. The movie, of course, had been in Oliver Stone's hands before he left on his Bush biopsy IV and it's strangely coincidental to note that it also suffers from that movie's chronological flaw—its central character seems hollow now.

Penn's Milk, naturally, isn't just hollow—he's eerily and hollow. His default expression (which he uses a lot, in lieu of complex emotions or interesting dialogue) is a hostile smile. He is surrounded by his young firebrand actors, such as Franco, Emilio Hirsch and Diego Luna, who each regard him with equal awe (though it's hard to tell

whether they're looking over Penn the guru or Milk the character). Van Sant and Black clearly missed a trick here. For the real Milk—a former avowed Republican, an egotist and to some a difficult man-armed variety of a dream, conflicted biggie. In the end, we have to be satisfied with Penn, doing Penn, doing Penn. **Karen Misher**

Anticipation: Gus Van Sant, Sean Penn
A match made in heaven **B**

Execution: Winning Sean Penn to him is always worth the ticket price, even if this is a disappointingly conventional biopic **B**

In Anticipation: Related issue: "Shouldn't he have been killed to live?" **B**



THREE MONKEYS

2002 • R • 97 min. *The World Can't Hear You Scream*
Lulu, Ben Chaplin

YOUNG
ADULT

The nature of cinema is to deal in lies. But through their authorial lies—fictional stories, edited narratives—the nature of cinema is also to reveal some kind of truth. This understanding animates beneath the surface of *Three Monkeys*, a film in which a family's lies unravel a deeper honesty.

It is an opening scene that sets the tone for Gaylen's exceptional use of light and shadow and revolutionary sound design. We see (or rather hear) a car hit a pedestrian on a deserted road at night. Behind the wheel is a politician, Serwet (Birkan Kozul), who promises her maid driver,

Bylyp (Neylan Düzgün), to take the rap in return for a lump sum when he is released from prison. This will be the first of a series of lies in a complex, non-linear narrative that will see Bylyp's family—his wife, Hacer (Hacer Arslan), and son, İhsan (İhsan Savaşan)—gradually picked apart.

This may be Gaylen's most accessible work yet—it has something of the Coen brothers about its structure, albeit with more restrained performances from the uniformly excellent cast. Best of all is Hacer Arslan as the owed wife emerging slowly from her shell. But he is the most complex of all, as it leads to a relationship at the core of the film, which Gaylen bravely

uses to punish her as things wash a clean. It is a cruel and jarring leap that sees her exploitation twisted into something entirely different—an excess of passion that suggests, in the end, an almost masochistic fear of female sexuality.

But this is the only misstep in a film that otherwise quite brilliantly plays with its form. Gaylen, a suspected photographer, paints the screen in brooding, colorful, which convey a sense of trapped emotion hanging heavy in the air. Many of the details in people's faces are observed by either bleeding sunlight or murky dark, which give way to bold and strangely clashing close-ups at key moments. "Wind

whistles through the background, and water (whether in showers, sweat, tears or wash basins) is a recurring motif for the sense of guilt both past and present.

By the film's conclusion, the thin note of lies has been torn, revealing a compelling truth after all: you don't lie because you love, you lie because you hate. **Mark Kischner**

Anticipation Gaylen is building a deeply rich world.

Delight Gaylen's use of light and shadow is a masterpiece.

Intrigue The treatment of the wife's role will have you in a state of panic.

WE SIT DOWN WITH TURKISH DIRECTOR NURI BILGE CEYLAN TO REFLECT ON HIS MEMORIES OF LONDON – THE CITY THAT FIRST STIRRED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH MOVIES AND HIS PASSION FOR FILMMAKING. INTERVIEW BY MATT BOCHENSKI.

FILMOGRAPHY NURI BILGE CEYLAN

Three Monkeys (2008)

Domino (2005)

Smile (2002)

Dark of Day (2001)

The Seed and the Sower (2000)

Blue (1999)

When I graduated, English was the only foreign language I could speak, therefore I chose to come to London. That was a period when I was trying to decide what to do in life. I came here and I started to work as a waiter, but in the meantime I was going to exhibitions and movies.

Actually, I was not sure that I wanted to be a filmmaker, I was just thinking about what to do. In the end I think I decided to be a photographer first. Then I went to Moscow, near India, to find a solution. I decided to try the East, but the East didn't give me any answer so I went back to Turkey and went into military service.

In military service I decided to make films. It was after I read the autobiography of Roman Polanski. I was reading a lot of books because I was alone, I didn't know anybody and all my friends were away. Cinemas were very important. I think in that situation – you can take big decisions if you are lonely. And Polanski's book influenced me a lot – a life starting from zero, and an adventure. His life was very impressive to me.

But in those days there were no video cameras so I couldn't try my abilities in a cheap way. After military service I decided to come back to London again, hoping that I could maybe study cinema on cinema to speed up the process. This time I was not unsure, before I was just thinking what to do next, but this time I had an idea.

I couldn't study here but instead I went to many movies. There was a friend here and I was staying in his house – he was working but every

morning I used to go to King's Cross and see three movies one after the other, and after that another cinematheque, so probably I watched three movies a day. My passion for cinema increased in that period, and the NFI was also a very important place for me.

I was very lonely here also, and I think that was an important thing. You are very open to things if you are lonely, and the film influenced me much more than before. I remember some films that I didn't like before, but when I watched them here again they influenced me a lot because I was more receptive. *Spaced*, for instance. When I watched it in Turkey I didn't know Tarantino and half-way through I just walked out. But when I watched it in the NFI here again, because of the loneliness, my soul was more receptive, and the film affected me a great amount. Three days later I was only thinking about the film.

I think watching films here was my first school of cinema, because I think watching films is the best school and the best way of learning cinema. When I went back to Turkey again after maybe six months I studied cinema for about three years but then I left it because it seemed to me a bit time-consuming, because I was not so young. And after that, to make my first short film took about 10 more years.

Read the full transcript of this interview at <https://filmmakerinterview.co.uk> from the week of release.



THE BROKEN

LEADS
Lena Headey

SCREENPLAY David Farr
DIRECTOR John Dahl
STARRING Lena Headey, Michael Fassbender, Milla Jovovich



MOSCOW, BELGIUM

LEADS
Milla Jovovich

SCREENPLAY David Farr
DIRECTOR John Dahl
STARRING Milla Jovovich, Lena Headey, Michael Fassbender

A solid horror is hard to come by these days, it's either torture porn or weak thrashers on offer. But fortunately for us, British writer-director Sean Ellis has other ideas. With a nod and a wink to Edgar Allan Poe and Alfred Hitchcock, he has created a slick, supernatural thriller set in a cold and dispiritingly quiet contemporary London. Lena Headey plays Gina, a young doctor whose life takes a strange turn when a minor breeze, unperceived during a family dinner, unleashes a series of unpleasant and terrifying events. Ellis takes the opportunity to build on an unformed sense of suspense with subtle asides that serve up some satisfying B-movie scares without detracting from the swiftness of the script. And not a noted teenager in sight. **Helen Cowley**

Loaded in Canada, *Belgium* hails from the noble stable of Belgium's gritty grey dramas with heart. True to form, its setting is a working-class suburb (the titular Moscow on the outskirts of Ghent) and its protagonist is a woman juggling motherhood and work with the destructive influence of race. That woman is Milla's mother of three, forty-something and dowdy. Milla's husband is pursuing a red line crisis without conviction, while she has accidentally attracted the interest of Johnny, a 20-year-old truck driver who offers her an uncertain but exciting alternative. *Belgium* is unsatisfyingly unconvincing, perhaps because even in its technical accomplishments, the sub-Darwinian brothers-drama lacks any emotional surprise. **James Brunsell**



HAMLET 2

LEADS
Steve Grogan

SCREENPLAY Andrew Burt
DIRECTOR Tim League
STARRING Steve Grogan, Catherine Keener, Amy Poehler



MUM & DAD

LEADS
Perry Rees

SCREENPLAY David Farr
DIRECTOR John Dahl
STARRING Perry Rees, Lena Headey, Michael Fassbender

After Hollywood pop-ups in *Marie Antoinette*, *Night at the Museum* and *Therapy*, Steve Grogan grabs a British US role in this oddball indie comedy about a failed actor-turned drama teacher attempting to stage a high-school musical sequel to *Hamlet*. An amazing opening montage introduces us to Dana Manche (Grogan) by inter-cutting his grand ruminations ("To act or to live...") with his on-screen achievements (TV ads for herpes cream). Co-written by Rosie Park's *Pink Binky*, the rest of *Hamlet 2* is mawkish but not naive. But there's a brilliant support from Catherine Keener and *Saturday Night Live*'s Amy Poehler, and when Manche finally reveals the show, you can't beat a big number called *Rock Me, Sexy Jesus!* **Jonathan Crook**

At one point in this sordid slice of British horror, actor Perry Rees is seen walking into a piece of human flesh. Fairly enough, if you were to re-edit the entire film, cutting out every other scene, the end result would be exactly the same – a vile piece of masochism. Lena (Olga Podolski), a Polish cleaner at Heathrow airport, is kidnapped by a psychotic family who live at the end of the runway and subjected to torture and household chores by the mother to avoid the murderous wrath of the father. While writer and director Steven Sheel may think that juxtaposing extreme sadism with traditional working-class family values is oh-so-clever and sinister, it ends up being completely ridiculous. Especially when it seems the whole film serves no other purpose than to make some sickening sexual forecasts. **Ed Andrews**



A CHRISTMAS TALE

GRADE
A-

CRITIC Janet Jackson
STARRING Catherine Deneuve, Jean-
Paul Baudouin, Jean-Claude



OUTLANDER

GRADE
A-

CRITIC Janet Jackson
STARRING Peter Jackson, Peter Jackson, Peter Jackson

"A family of weirdos?" declares a relative newcomer to the *Vieillesse*. "Not at all, we're ordinary people" is the reply. Of course, in French choral dramas, family dysfunction is entirely ordinary — and so is director Arnaud Desplechin's bag of Brechtian tricks (a prologue rendered in puppetry; straight-to-camera addresses; mismatched episode titles; split screens; photomontage) as never quite enough to distinguish this from any number of ensemble melodramas. The cast — including unapproachable screen siren Catherine Deneuve — expertly incarnates the family haunted by loss, treachery and (literally) bad blood. But the film's endingly protected duration makes the *Vieillesse* feel like Christmas: guests who just won't leave. **Aaron Hill**

As the disowned child of a Ridley Scott/Peter Jackson gangbang, *Outlander* is a warlike B movie classic that's as shot as a... shot? The plot sees a spaceman (Jim Caviezel) crash land in Norway in 706 A.D., upsetting the local Viking village with his presence. However said visitor has brought with him a nasty glowing monster that rips people apart. The aforementioned intergalactic wayfarer must therefore kill this beast with the help of the hostile, yet religiously diverse Vikings — but without his atomic projectile-like plasma gun, which he dropped in the river. No seriously? Never one to pass a camp-dressing-up first, Ron Perlman shows up, but even he can't distract from the fact that the whole thing is utterly pointless. Even John Hart is rubbish. **Ed Andrews**



SEX DRIVE

GRADE
B+

CRITIC Joe Neumaier
STARRING Joe Neumaier, Joe Neumaier, Joe Neumaier



TWO LOVERS

GRADE
A-

CRITIC Janet Jackson
STARRING Janet Jackson, Janet Jackson, Janet Jackson

Follow two said his best friends Lance and Felix on a literal and metaphorical journey to adulthood as they take a road trip to Knoxville as part of an quest to lose his virginity before college. And they and his brother a vintage sports car to make the journey — a sign that hilarious romps will ensue. The film's one laugh-out loud moment comes towards the end: courtesy of a giant Moroccan doughnut costume and a police hold up, but by that point the will-to-laugh may have been long lost after a relentless run of diarrhea, emesis and teenage banter jokes. Apparently the filmmakers see it as a comic intelligence John Hughes homage: then guess our *American Pie* rip-off, suggesting boundless optimism is one of their greatest virtues. **Prudence Gray**

Deck, painful and funny, writer/director James Gray's modern love story is powered by a fierce emotional economy and superb performances from Joaquin Phoenix and Gwyneth Paltrow. Living with his parents after an abusive suicide attempt, Phoenix's is polar photographer finds himself caught in the eternal chase between two women: lively caring brunette Vanessa Shute and damaged loner blonde Paltrow. Not for the first time in his career, masterful filmmaker Gray takes a classic romance dynamic and mixes it with a tighter, darker engine that burns with an intensity and danger that's distinctly anti-mainstream. Joaquin Phoenix has gone, on record to claim that this is going to be his final performance. On this evidence, we doubt that. **Jonathan Chacker**



THE

BACK SECTION



21



MAN DOWN

2006



'ON A LARGE ENOUGH TIMELINE, THE SURVIVAL RATE FOR EVERYONE DROPS TO ZERO.'

BY LANCE LARSEN, KYLE DILL

Well, technically, no matter what the timeline, the survival rate for everyone is zero regardless. But that doesn't change the facts: death sucks and we're all fucked. So we present our second annual tribute to 2008's fallen stars, whose passing leaves the cinematic landscape that little bit darker (or, in some cases, actually better off).



~~~~~

### DR. HENRY 'INDIANA' JONES

(July 20, 1903 – May 22, 2005)

This year's lone witness to one of the most brutal and depraved murders known to man... At crime so hideous and callously executed that it seemed the made of every person who has ever visited a slaughterhouse. The rugged archaeologist and whip-wielding expedition leader Indiana Jones was repeatedly skull-bashed, bloody-purified and subjected to the most appallingly creative use of pit, knife and special effects since George W. Bush and Tony Blair staged the invasion of Iraq using only finger puppets, matches and a barbs of twisted ketchup. It left both fans and depressives, conspiracy-sites distraught that such a wonderful hero for anyone's cinematic escapism could be slain with such cynicism and bile by George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. And yet the movie was still so huge. We can but hope that the ramifications of *Quantum Break* is made to look like a tea party in comparison to the punishment that will rightly be doled out to the offenders. **—Ed Anderson**



★★★★★★★★★★★★

### RICHARD WIDMARK

(December 25, 1914 – March 24, 2008)

Inaction crystallized. Inaction – Richard Widmark was all of those things – and that was on the few occasions he got to play the good guy. For his ability to look on his horses with death and sadness was necessary to an unerring talent for lending a chilling gallery of evildoers and givers something short of acceptable grace. From his effect on *Indestructible* to *Twelve O'Clock High* to *1947's Ace of Spades* through such big budget hits as *Heat*, *The West* (the show) (1952) and the superior police procedural of *Mission: Impossible* (1968), Widmark was the man you turned to for negativity of the caliber of his best. **—Adam Lee Horley**



●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

### ROY SCHEIDER

(November 10, 1932 – February 10, 2008)

Scheider's heart nearly won Scheider was like a football team before to complete his role as a shortstop, the heart of every good player while believing under the misapprehension "I could do that" his grating look and nervous manner suited the role. It's perfectly – and he played the role of John F. Kennedy's pimp in *Glitter* so we'll see that prop for the first time. *Glitter* was a grating role in *The French Connection* (1971). His everyman persona was most memorably humanized in *Jaws* (1975), but as *Rob Reiner* is a natural master of the *Jaws* (1975), he proved that he could do it with the best of them. **—Rogers** **—Adam Lee Horley**

# CAREER DEATHS



## BERNIE MAC

(*Timber's* 1997–August 8, 2000)

Forever living in the shadow of the more renowned Big Mac, poor old Bernie's life was one of disappointment. Despite failing to net the screen sitcom developer like *House Party 2* (1994) and *Boyz n the City* (1997), he finally landed a high-profile role as Executive Class in a raucous black musical biopic *Boyz n the City* (1999). But the frustration of being surrounded by such hot players, while being aware that no Hollywood producer would ever allow him to hit that un-catchable deviated blue line even a bit part in the *Boyz* sequel, could stress him up. Mind you, playing opposite *Boyz* Disney—a man twice as young as someone who has learned to include cheese fries—don't hardly a surprise. **Ed Andrews**



## AL PACINO

## ROBERT DE NIRO

Dark in the day, when Robert De Niro looked old, Al Pacino looked like he was still in his prime. So what's he doing now, married living? There's something about that hip-hop to come at Nightclub Kill—the film that finally ought to struggle the life out of the machine that is his career career—in Al Pacino: the Two Greatest Actors of Their Generation turned two greatest epitaphs of the dead, sad death of an era. Maybe the gray-haired two-bean who turned it up at the Atlanta Hotel in Dubai is exactly De Niro's greatest performance—a life-size meditation in which he's playing the role of a black-hungry shark devouring his teenage son down one hole while whining his partner out of the other. Where Pacino used to fly, now he also coars—both indecentuous plasticism shows a daily birds are all that's left when the good man ran out. The biggest name in Hollywood doesn't go to go anymore, but then again, Pacino always was a white dwarf. **Mark Berman**





# IN MEMORIAM



A HONOR TO THE DEAD IS ALWAYS APPROPRIATE

## HEATH LEDGER

(April 4, 1979 – January 22, 2008)

The mystery of Heath Ledger will live on forever in our hearts and minds — the actor's legacy of fearless Hollywood performances is now each of ours. *Ripcord*

## MICHAEL CRICHTON

(October 23, 1942 – November 4, 2008)

Revised an old idea for the script for *Jurassic Park* before his timely passing. [expected in summer 2010]

## GEORGE CARLIN

(May 12, 1937 – June 22, 2008)

Assaulted the ideas of a society built on consumerism while destroying the rears of *Billie Jean*. Now immortalized as our favorite actor in *Shogun*. *Clay*

## PAUL NEWMAN

(January 26, 1925 – September 26, 2008)

Will be easily missed by movie enthusiasts everywhere. Also did a voice over in *Garfield* — the name alone says it all. *Clay*



## ALEXANDER COURAGE

(December 10, 1919 – May 6, 2008)

Not content with writing the theme to *Star Trek* and *Jurassic Park*, Courage went on to pen the unforgettable theme to the *Doctor Who* soundtrack.

## SYDNEY POLLACK

(July 1, 1924 – May 26, 2008)

Pollack directed *Jurassic* in which he made *Quint* perform in a red dress (figure hugging enough to test anyone's distaste for gayness).

## DON LAFONTAINE

(August 24, 1949 – September 1, 2008)

Don, *Quit Your LaFontaine* provided voiceovers for almost 5,000 trailers and much has been said about his work with his wife's style.

## ISAAC HAYES

(August 20, 1942 – August 10, 2008)

The *Harold Lloyd* (played) said that it was right about the whole, *guitarist* (played) *Ben* (something else) *guitarist* (played).



## ESTELLE REINER

(June 5, 1914 – October 25, 2008)

Reiner's epitaph reads: "That girl in the orgasm scene from *When Harry Met Sally* who said, 'I'd have rather than having.' Allen's mother (in *Love*)"

## CHARLTON HESTON

(October 4, 1923 – April 5, 2008)

Yeah, we noticed it last year, that it's worth repeating: *One* to *pray* that you from his *old* *dead* hands. *David* *Barrett*



# DVD

# SYMPHONY

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### THE LIVING END

by Dave Karger

"Los Angeles is the alternative capital of the world," says a disgruntled poster in Gregg Arkin's *Deadly F\*\*\*er Up* (1983), the first of his Teenage Apocalypse Trilogy, and the film that many cite as his most personal. Linklater might argue for Austin, Texas. Van Sant might point for Portland or Seattle, while Jarmusch could claim his eyes and pick any spot in America. But Arkin's a Los X-er from California, the state where Douglas Coupland set his 1981 novel *Generation X* and the foreboding house of metal opera number Dennis Cooper. So, LA it is.

Thrupped in a big metal studio where a minor-league boxer is smoking, getting raped, and racing the Sumo in Gibson's in the Hall of the usually frustrated movie that picks up Arkin's next one. Rotted with a copious B-Film standard (Steven (Gilbert Luna) is making a documentary about his friends who, though full of bravado when it comes to nightlife, ending, reveal confused, brain-dead souls).

In a cynically sparse, poorly lit and off with drug-smoking, leather-jacketed city kids too apathetic to act. The *Deadly F\*\*\*er Up* runs all passively and mumble to Steven's camera, depicting a system that which they feel disaffected.

*Deadly F\*\*\*er Up* is a style-related trash anthem, the best wicked way with a script and is mostly featureless to heart. Funer than John Waters but still in his debt, compensation act on Arkin's spends. Before his pioneering involvement with the radical New Queer Cinema movement of the '90s.

NGC was a short-lived HIV-positive cinema, that gave us Todd Haynes' *Gas Van Sant* and Tom Kalin from America, Bruce LaBruce from Canada, and Jason Jekins from England. They mark two figures up at NGC (best best) picture with *Abraham* (aka *Phantom*) (1991, Haynes), *My Dear Psycho* (Mads) (1991, Van Sant), and in *Anal Pleasure: The Living End* (1992).



Taking AIDS as a catalyst to explore sexualization, *The Lusty Lady* is a serious movie about two gay guys whose lives are sliding into horror. And though it starts out on the wrong side of out (fostering tragic-happy looks and too wooden leads) in their originality and we do have you hooked by the organic heart-to-heart conclusion.

Time with easily discomfort and shocked by a feeling of pervasive death. It was initiation for suffering up is disease of romantic longing diagnosed by a man versus of mourning and a pure holiness. Sea-It shoot-ony up. Time but what of it? Death's early words are time responds. Death's choice of a log-in-see, which does a happily no longer a reason to answer.

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## GREGG'S GANG

We asked actress and author Sarah Lazzari who starred in the unforgettable Egg in *Aniki Moushies* (1997) and will play Margot in Joe Sheehan's *A New Place* and Brady Corbet who starred in Anika's *Mystic River* (2004) and Michael Fassbender a English-language remake of *Fanny Gans* (2007), for the top three Aniki movies.

## SARAH LASSETZ

We top three would be Western. American. Like me? Surely? I'll take it. I saw JFK at Senate news 1 year ago. There were only a few. Then Robert Kennedy's Phoenix [2000] and then a whole lot of Gary Arndt and Jessica Desser for the Crime. Being in Western was an instructive experience - like finally being in their world people said in high school. It was that you got the chance to go in a similar situation that people remember 40 years later and that made a profound impact on their lives and perhaps made them a little less afraid of this world.

READY CORRECT

The **Chase Dreamer** (1985) because of its amazing over-the-top production design. Totally Fucked Up because of its raucous, adolescent style because it is closest to my heart. I love Gregg Arkin because he is truly uncompromising. Whether on screen or otherwise, he is always true.



## KAMIKAZE GIRLS

**EXHIBIT 10-1**

As *Laurel's* fashionable kids go over for the 80s season, Tokyo comes continuous to lag up the Lovers look. A modish long-in-sleeve strapless at preserving itself (read) girl-friend, Japanese Latin sub-culture is coming with earlier fashion. Dance Latin Fever Romance are ample lines and pattern. I see shows. *Laurel's* Latin camp it up. While *Arturo* comes a little party but he is there and says: "Then there is the *Guero* Latin. Think extensive lines: white pleatons, lace bonnets and hair dyed the colour of butter's face. It is *Big Poppa in Wonderland* - best little girl's fighting clothes with pom-poms."

While DIY is often a necessary (if Tokyo's a whelp, you have to mail order or make your own stuff), Laine's interests are big business. First we got to get your fill at the right food shops, such as Ganyu, The Secret Shrimp, Bright where you'll see total over 2000.

And if it seems like *ETERNAL* isn't doing a pairing made following Tetsuya Nakashima's *Manbiki Kazoku* (2004). The film, based on a novel by Michio Takekoshi (aka *Sweet Little*), and *ETERNAL* director - Mamoru Nishihara - tells a timely fantasy plot by sea-life pop star Aoi Tsuchiya (last seen in a *reikoku*-comedian in the eye-on-the *Reikoku*).

Schlag me, baby! a number of an aggressive subculture identified by its love of oversized shirts, flat-top and Asian floor-length robes. She runs with The Pussywails, an all-girl motorcycle crew who embroider their robes in lock-off and dis-style apertures. In an odd twist of fate, Monique (a kick-butt at smoking outcrop zones and hoots) finds herself offering to embroider kinks a war robe, simultaneously discovering the loss of femininity.

There is an understanding of the self-sufficiency in their classroom, one realization in a conventional classroom that even the poor students a better going and recovery in which can be able to make good progress.

With superb art design and dreamy melodies, *Samurai Girls* is a stylized musical tale for teen fans. It's one to yourself or with no one else at all. The message is centered when Nakano is selected by 0700 as a top designer to construct the designs she adores while being in charge to model them. Each girl's name gives up - they were once out of life. These fans will be their own modern, trendy, anime girls in a minute.

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# LISTINGS

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ON THE WEEK OF RELEASE, OR SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER.

## AVAILABLE DECEMBER 29

### BEN X

Greg Kinnear stars as the autistic and frequently bullied Ben, who is forced to enroll in the world of online gaming to get a life.

## AVAILABLE JANUARY 12

### RED SORGHUM

Yves's stunning debut also produced non-prilleded Greg Kinnear's Ben, who is forced to enroll in the world of online gaming to get a life.

### SOMERS TOWN

Superb and semi-improvised work from Oliver Hudson and Thomas Turpin set around London's King's Cross, that explores themes of friendship, identity, and belonging.



### THE CREW

Lead and great British gangster film that makes good use of a young cast and manages to avoid the usual pitfalls of a road genre.

### ALEXANDRA

This stylish and affecting non-war film from one of Russia's most intelligent directors follows an old woman to the front lines where she witnesses the human effects of the Russian war while visiting her grandson.

### GARBAGE WARRIOR

Superb meditation about renegade soldier Mattia di Biase who uses found objects to advance the art of Garbage Warrior.

### THE WAVE

California border experiment has forward to modern-day Berlin. Wound of Borderline.

### THE HANDMAID'S TALE

Harold Pinter co-wrote the screenplay Margaret Atwood wrote the novel. Harsh and brutal and very disturbing story. It has all the elements, but it's far from perfect.

### HIGH SPIRITS

Peter O'Toole leads the cast in this dramatic romance as a hard-up Irish hunter who takes ghost sightings to his extreme. Hilariously weird.

### JOE

A young Susan Sarandon returns as a natural patient suffering from a drug addiction. When her father kills her drug-dealing lover, she goes into a fugue state but never escapes her.

### ROSEBUD

Peter O'Toole plays an English spy for the CIA. Exploring Peter O'Toole's career as a British actor.

### SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY

Andrew Clarke Jackson and Peter Finch are two men both sleeping with the same woman (Marilyn Monroe) in Solange's progressive character study.

## AVAILABLE JANUARY 19

### FINN'S GIRL

Featuring a 20-minute excerpt from the award-winning film My Friend Finn. Finn's Girl is the gay festival about with the award-winning portrayal of lesbian relationship.

## MANUFACTURING DESERT

A riveting examination of the slow erosion of free speech and media objectivity, based on the book by Naomi Klein and Edward Herman



**AVAILABLE JANUARY 26**

## EL BAÑO DEL PAPA

A small Uruguayan town gets itself in a lather when they hear the Pope – and 66,000 visitors for pilgrims – are coming to town



## THE FALL

Terrone labour of love in a lavish ode to the power of visual storytelling shot over a multi-tiered narrative across chapters to a young girl

## YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Quick treat for a delight performed by Sophia Loren in the closing act, while, though there be today's standards, still stories

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

A Christmas TV classic, Richard Harris film shows the events that led to the infamous charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War

## LAST DAYS OF MUSSOLINI

The late Paul Bridger plays Mussolini in the final days and last night before death awaits as dawn

## MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES

Starting the legendary Joan Carney as the real-life silent movie star Lou Christie



**AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 2**

## THE RULING CLASS

Working class comedy starring Peter Dinklage and Alessio Boni. Not everyone's cup of tea for sure, but well worth sharing with foreign friends

## GOMORRAH

Apocalypse model extended tale of the wholesale trade takeover of Naples, shot with an urgent neo-realist style by Matteo Garrone

## SUKIYAKI WESTERN DJANGO

Baroque Japanese spaghetti western from Mitsu to a Rio 21 westerns Quentin Tarantino (aka cinema) made-up of slick ultra-violence



**AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 9**

## THE VISITOR

One of the films of the year sees Richard Jenkins meet as a college professor reconnecting with his after the death of his wife

## THE LAURENT CANTET COLLECTION

Showcasing the three films – Human Resources (2006), Time Out (2006) and Healing South (2006) – that preceded the Palme d'Or winning The Graces, this is a must for Cannes fans



**AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 16**

## FILM NOIR

This is a real utility – an animated film noir tale with all the knowings. The dead cups and before bedtime

## TRANS-SIBERIAN

A desperate couple going through a rough patch join the trans-Siberian railway from Orenburg to Berlin, unaware they're stepping in the middle of a big smuggling scam. This old fashioned thriller stars a Russian star Woody from the stage play Emily Mortimer

## 13 MOST BEAUTIFUL... SONGS FOR ANDY WARHOL'S SCREEN TESTS

Andy Warhol shot almost 500 screen tests – simple, often silent studies of visitors to the Factory – on the New York black and white camera. Spaced in slow motion, they have a calming beauty



**AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 23**

## ALICE ET MARTIN

Brian Fife interviews André Tardieu made this earlier story of hidden parts and sensitive affairs moving French cinema's modern screen stars, Juliette Binoche



## LA ZONA

When a well-to-do woman is brutally murdered in her gated Mexican community, the wealthy local residents turn vigilante. La Zona continues the tradition of violent Latin American cinema (A Good Woman, Dirty) that investigates social and economic inequality







## JIM JARMUSCH BOX SET: VOL.2

### HARDY ARISTO'S

Not in My Lane" (co-signatory Jim Jarmusch is the king of cliché). We're expected to wistfully remember the Euro theme of *Mystery Train* (1989) because... another way of describing Jarmusch's obsessions about this film would be that it's a story for punks, but Jarmusch compensates with his signature ability to make any scenario as cool as death. You can well want to be driving around Memphis in a beatnik pickup or just being just here party to a moment of murder. Jarmusch wisely pulls off something not with new Americans as he no doubt knows, but through a kind of shared humanism that is instantly familiar in a good way.

*Mystery Train* (1989) represents Jarmusch in full global form. Five stories, a subterranean road movie the wrong side of postmodern. And it's around five stories in nightmare mode. The first story is great, well told and interesting. The rest have their good points, particularly *Endless Drive* as the finest quality and a genuine talent. Most women were played as excellent. Overall, it's like the cinema of *Mystery Train*, but the director the innocent victims of stereotypes.

*Dead Man* (1995) dispenses of the multiple narratives formula in favor of a ritual that often starts and ends and has a story in the middle. Johnny Depp plays a time-conscious film as Cleveland who, through circumstances beyond his control, becomes an animal killer. The film is theatrical in tone, from the poppiness in the end scene to the postmodernizing. The movie industry is people with a sense of religious violence, as if Jarmusch has some kind of belief. *Dead Man* is reminding us that life is the wild frontier and simply brutal. *Dead Man* is a fantasy and you go and it, a little, a little, but like *Mystery Train* it has an appeal that by the first scene, rather as with us were there, even in the most uninteresting. *Black and White* (1999) is the road movie taken into the movie in the local, down to earth when the film turns into a sort of spiritual death trip.

Jarmusch is a good filmmaker. He probably has a little book, a book for his punks at all times called *How to be an Independent Director*. *Black and White* will keep it in Art Studios in 20 Years'. And here, consistently, he's a little of getting through 10-15 of film without pausing or with another scene, who should not be here, who is having a mission, or whatever. His use of cliché is deliberate and knowing, which is to respect, but the movie oversteers them and the end result is always something. **EXCELLENCE**

# THE JIM JARMUSCH TOP 10 GUIDE TO LAZY RACIAL EPITHETS

## BLACK AMERICANS

Sexy, strong and dangerous

## WHITE AMERICANS

Spontaneous and unpredictable

## MIXED-RACE AMERICANS

Literally, mix of the above.

## NATIVE AMERICANS

Spontaneous and unpredictable. Also better than white people.

## JAPANESE

More than living characters of Western culture.

## BRITISH

Strapped and punky singers who sound strongly anti-Beatles.

## ITALIANS

Sexy, unpredictable, beautiful, elegant, also mixed with race and intelligence.

## FRENCH

Sexy, rude and poetic in a way.

## SCANDINAVIANS

Drunk and depressed.

## AFRICANS

More things.

CULT



WALLER  
JEFFS



HERO



# THE ARCHIVE

THE FIRST IN A NEW SERIES OF RETROSPECTIVES ON CLASSIC FILMS AND CELEBRITIES ORIGINALLY RELEASED BEFORE WE SPRANG INTO BEING.

## SCHIZOPOLIS

Directed by Robert F. Kennedy  
With: PHILIP LINDSEY

Having scaled the critical and commercial heights with sex, lies and violence (1980) and in the process precipitated a new wave in American independent cinema, Steven Soderbergh's career floundered after poorly received if personal costar and independent studio projects *Kuffs* (1983), *King of the Hill* (1985) and *Underneath* (1986). The latter an underseen re-make of Robert Siodmak's *Criss Cross* (1948) left the director – who had unbecomingly proclaimed after the atrociously false *Of* victory of his debut that “it’s all downhill from here” – so disoriented with the prospect of mainstream production that he emotionally turned his back on commercial filmmaking. A courageous decision informed by a desire to rediscover what had initially excited him about the medium and to extend himself that “filmmaking is a business and an art” the resulting *Schizopolis* (1986) gave free reign to Soderbergh’s increasingly repressed and chaotic personality.

That guerrilla style on old Art cinema equipment over a 10-month period in Florida, *Schizopolis* was funded with \$250,000. Soderbergh had shaved out of Universal funding secured plans that he was making something they would never want to see. With a minimalist crew shorn of all who doubted his technique and actors including the director himself (also as well as undertaking script and photography duties also plays two lead roles) Soderbergh set about producing a film that grew out of his interest in paroled time travellers. New Age religion and the American obsession with identity. A succinct synopsis is a tall order. Suffice to say that central to the narrative is Fletcher Munson (Soderbergh), a man faced by work colleagues who stay at any cost be looking at either with his own wife. Tony Bentley. Soderbergh’s real-life spouse from whom he separated prior to filming played the wife, it’s certainly strange as psychoanalytic therapy. Meanwhile, and whilst Munson struggles to write an unpublished speech for his demanding boss, T. Astorick Zahnderson (Mike Malone),

*by David Kynaston, <http://www.schizopolis.com>*

He had talked before with actor Ellen Geffen (David Aronow) in discussing many mayhem. Displaying an interest in selfhood and identity, the complexity of language to another screenwriter as evidenced by the gibberish – which actually sounds progressively intelligible – in which the character’s dialogue

frequently brings confusion and comprehension the film is peppered with creative narrative deviation and cerebral visual sedition such as a surreal finale pursued by hospital orderlies. *Schizopolis* also adopts a wittily prevalent baroque style with the extended-up series sequences and fast change in-camera character interviews recalling the work of Soderbergh’s hero Richard Linkin. Influences as disparate as Luis Buñuel, Woody Pylon and Jacques Tati can also be discerned. The result is both audacious and titanic. At one point a character contemplates a love poem consisting the line “I might not know much, but I know that the wind sings your name” but with a slight hop that makes it hard to understand if in standing your own condition. Other poems are shot point blank. On hearing that an esteemed colleague has died the usual eulogies are dismissed with in favour of the earlier words spoken “Here I you glad it wasn’t you?” Well it will be gone before you figure out what Linkin’s death really means so let’s forget the both. Much fun and go and have a drink.”

The reason for *Schizopolis* being less comprehension to fully suppressed hostility in Cannes where the film received a few key world premiere. Harvey Weinstein wanted to buy it right union for a million dollars. Soderbergh told him he’d be able to see it first. Weinstein did not properly withdraw his offer. The next weekend the film looked more potent and even amongst the independent sector where Soderbergh was expected, relatively positive reactions was seen. The London Film Festival declined to screen it despite publicly pointing to its role when Soderbergh had attended the year before with *Underneath*. “The story of the situation really moved me – here I’d made about an independent-minded as film as one could make and the independents are at odds of it” remembered a remember. Indeed Soderbergh in *Coming Away With It* (1991) – further *Adaptations* (1997) *The Looker* (1999) *Yes You Saw It* (1999) (1999) the director’s go-to and frequently infamous non dialogues or interviews with Richard Linkin.

An early self-dubbed derisively complex and delightfully clever work that sets as an intelligent commentary on the medium. *Schizopolis* (1986) *by David Kynaston, <http://www.schizopolis.com>*

Soderbergh’s sagacity and confidence. His most truly great work (and it is true) has been his most successful because he has the idea of a film up to a film nobody has heard of. It has to be true, structure and story influenced such of Soderbergh’s subsequent productions from *Out of Sight* (1998) to *Die*







## CHÁVEZ: THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEvised

A Case Study of Politics and the Media

Rod Sturgeson

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## THE CINEMA OF LATIN AMERICA

Edited by Alberto Flores and Marcos Star Lora

Preface by Walter D'Almeida

A must-have for anyone who professes admiration and enthusiasm for Latin American cinema. Golden has a selection of films that offer a competent job of synthesising the nature and virtues of a body of cinema, this anthology manages to grasp the genuine character of Latin American film.

Heide D. Fernandez (Florida, Georgia State University)

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# CHAPTER SIX INCOMING

**BUT OR NOT**

TRACKING A FUTURE  
RELEASE  
IN THE LWJL'S RADAR

WILLIAMSON'S

21

## BROKEN EMBRACES

**WATCH IT** HBO (starts Aug. 23)

**IMAGES** Though it's difficult to come by, a set of gorgeous promo shots from *Amor & Mercy*'s cast this week showed up online. Looking like they were shot by Anne LaRoche, they reveal a sophisticated, sexy Spanish-dance-and-Pendleton-Care look sensation.

## ROBOCOP

**WATCH IT** Turner (starts Dec. 10)

**GOSSIP** Jeon Jee-ho tells us he's looking to "redefine the universe" of RoboCop, so it's definitely not a straight sequel. And caring much? "I like working with movie stars and so I'm really open to that," is all he's saying for now.

## MARY AND MAX

**WATCH IT** Aardman (starts Dec. 10)

**FESTIVALS** Adam Elliot's *Mary and Max*, the story of a pen friendship between an eight-year-old girl and an obese New Yorker with Asperger Syndrome, looks set to be the latest highbrow animation. It opens the Sundance Film Festival in January.

## NOTTINGHAM

**WATCH IT** HBO (starts Dec. 10)

**GOSSIP** It's starting to sound bad. Producer Brian Koppelman has revealed that Russell Crowe is playing Robin Hood, playing the Sheriff of Nottingham, after the real Nottingham dies early on. It's an origin story, we're told.

## PONYO ON THE CLIFF BY THE SEA

**WATCH IT** Disney (starts Dec. 10)

**GOSSIP** Miyazaki is taking shape on Hayao Miyazaki's return to the director's chair. And it is spectacular. Both The Japan Times and Screen International are calling the unique tale on The Late Memento a masterpiece.

## TERMINATOR SALVATION

**WATCH IT** Warner (starts Dec. 10)

**FEEDBACK** We were going to talk about the new trailers for *Mo'G a Terminator* (now that still doesn't sound right) but just before we were to post the worldwide trailer landed in our laps, suggesting a proper popcorn experience.

## WATCHMEN

**WATCH IT** Warner (starts Dec. 10)

The new *Watchmen* trailer confirms two things: 1) Zack Snyder has captured the look of the comic, but 2) he may be struggling with the generic superhero tone. Footage showed in London was largely positive though, especially as a compelling ending sequence.



## AVATAR

**WORTHY** Jan Genie *EW Online 200*

**FOOTAGE** Or rather no footage: James Cameron himself has noted the rubicon that a trailer is due, saying, "You can't cut a great trailer right now because so much of the movie would be unrepresented." More unrepresentingly he added, "Sometimes we just show an [unreleased footage] because it's more exciting."

## WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

**WORTHY** Sam Asch *EW Online 200*

**NEWS** Where to start? *WTFWTA* is now confirmed for a December release. We'll see if Jonas has protected his version of the film (after an earlier picture signed by Bink, among many others), which reportedly had loads fleeing, not screenings in terror.

## RICKY

**WORTHY** Kasperine EA 100

**DISAP** The razor-cut has killed who life as Inevitable Queen's adaptation of Romy Grosz's book, in which a woman runs and women give birth to a baby with wings. The latest issue is that Ricky will debut in the Berlinale in February.

## THE BROTHERS BLOOM

**WORTHY** Ben Adams *EW Online 200*

**NEWS** Optimism was split on our blog after the London Film Festival screening, but Mark Ruffalo's Swedish Award nomination for Supporting Actor shows that there's plenty of love out there for this con paper.

## LET THE RIGHT ONE IN

**WORTHY** Lisa Smith *EW Online 200*

**FOOTAGE** Not only will we see the Swedish vampire film could be the latest bit of 2009, it now has a staggering 14 festival wins under its belt.

## FROZEN RIVER

**WORTHY** Lucy Lee *EW Online 200*

**FESTIVALS** Courtney Thorne-Smith made a name for herself as a Sundance Grand Jury prize on her first indie film, plus a handful of independent film screenings, one of which is for lead actress Melissa Leo.

## UNTITLED TODO SOLONOSZ FILM

**WORTHY** Ian Sisk *EW Online 200*

**CASTING** The screenplay is Solon's 1994. Haggard has a major new cinematic presence on the set as the film of Peter Dinklage film, which is no news on whether her role involves ladder-folding.

## SUCK

**WORTHY** Joanne *EW Online 200*

**CASTING** Okay, this might be rubbish, a comedy about a rock'n'roll band's bad for them, directed by a guy (see "Real Estate Agent" in Monday's *EW*), but it's a rather fun with Henry Rollins, Iggy Pop, Alice Cooper and Moby on board. Will you ever know?





# UNCOMING

## THE ROAD

**WRITER** Jim Jarmusch (20 May 2009)

**REVIEW** Perhaps it's because The Road bears a passing resemblance to Cormac McCarthy's *The Roadman* that the bad beats is building. Based on Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic novel, and starring Viggo Mortensen, the rule we don't have been changed (again) this time to May

## ASTRO BOY

**WRITER** Joe Laybourne (20 Jun 2009)

**NEWS** The greatest teenage series of all time has been announced for the big screen. It's a step up for David Benioff, previously a key guy for *Avatar*, and with a massive worldwide hit, he has for the little flying robot, the writer couldn't be higher.

## TREE OF LIFE

**WRITER** James Hill (20 Jun 2009)

**DISCUSS** Melia long-gestating project starring Brad Pitt, is a giant searching for eternal life in a slightly herding to *Genesis* in May ahead of an autumn release in the US.

## STAR TREK

**WRITER** J.J. Abrams (20 Jun 2009)

**PERFORMANCE** It may well be summer's greatest blockbuster, but the latest *Star Trek* trailer is a little too conventional. Much better was the footage that screened in London recently that looked a good mix of characters, action and camp.

## THE BOX

**WRITER** John Dahl (20 Jun 2009)

**DISCUSS** From indie, superior to unknown quantity, Richard Kelly has been a lifeline in just two films. Now *The Box*, a creepy tale of the frame will explore to nearly our desire, has been pushed to year's end. In likely over?

## PUBLIC ENEMIES

**WRITER** Michael Mann (20 Jun 2009)

**IMAGES** The first official images from Michael Mann's *Public Enemies* to *Indiana* gangster film does tell as much beyond the fact that they've nailed the period that And Johnny Depp doesn't age.

## MARCHING POWDER

**WRITER** Joe Laybourne (20 Jun 2009)

**CASTING** Another polished, drug-themed film from Joe Laybourne's side on the true story of a British dealer in a Bolivian prison that develops a successful economy. Don Cheadle has just signed on to play the lead. Please don't do your Owen's cocaine, mate.

## BAO LIEUTENANT: PORT OF CALL NEW ORLEANS

**WRITER** Peter King (20 Jun 2009)

**DISCUSS** Louis-bound man, Neil LaBute has suggested this, was co-lead of the *Abel* *Paran* chase will be more, emotional, and for *Madison* *Chromes*. We don't know if he'll lead his today, *Henry* *Kent* *style*, but there's at least one cock in it.

## OLD BOY

**WRITER** John Dahl (20 Jun 2009)

**WITH** One of the screen's first of the decade has been optioned for a US remake. *Old Boy* *Spelling*, *Will* *Shanks* and writer *Mark* *Spivack* will lead all of the returning to call it their. *Mark* *will* *likely* *be* *good* *will* *come* *of* *this*.

WHEREIN WE EXAMINE THE FILMS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, BUT NEVER WERE. THIS ISSUE WE CAST A DISCOVERING EYE ON CHARLIE KALFERN'S 1967 SCRIPT FOR A SCANNER DARKLY.

The work of Philip K Dick finds his natural territory for *Charlie Kaufman* whose own writing has frequently dipped into the realm of paranoia and skewed perception. Seven years before *Richard Linklater's* self-portrait *Adaptation* of *A Scanner Darkly*, Kaufman took his own shot at the idyllic *Bob Arctor*—an undercover cop who ends up investigating himself—inspired by a peculiar and mind-bending addition.

*A Scanner Darkly* concerns itself with Substance D, an outlawing science that ultimately splits us apart, because into two independent halves. Dick's novel echoes many of his own preoccupations as an schizophrenic added in the early 1970s and the surrounding drug culture of the era. As with *Linklater's* adaptation, Kaufman made fairly much on the plot of his source material with fewer surrealistic quips than one might expect. If anything, his twisted scenario is an entry to Dick's style, using delirious metaphor to drag from the ground and leaving no plot centre because the *Cyphalochromosome*—a sort of love lamp that much to connect love partners.

Almost no visible difference between the adaptation can be found in the script, diverging approach to the drug uses themselves. Both versions focus on important work scenes where *Arctor/Agent David* delivers a speech to a room full of psychotic evidence, showing him his propaganda film script, and turning to his own and obsessive. *Linklater's Arctor* grows weary and leaves the room, while *but Kaufman* has his face, emphasising the cruelty of the drug trade.

"Don't look there when after this or on it," he tells the assembled crowd "Half of them, especially the girls, didn't know they were getting on anything at all. See, the pushers themselves were stuck in a glass of wine, they get the house to an underage little chick, she passes out, then they inject her with a mix of... half heroin, half substance D."

This direct and explicit message to Kaufman's scenario in *Arctor's* relationship with his young love interest, the doctor named *Diana*. While she's certainly close and troubled in *Linklater's* eyes, Kaufman goes further to underline her damaged state. After what's hinted to be several sexual assaults she comes a little to ward off a sex-related situation. Clearly inspired, she now appears to control the *Arctor* doctor "with four pounds of coke in my pocket." Her whole impact of *Arctor's* a madman under a doctor who she's a deepening remark about he looks becomes a better running joke, one that is eventually paid off when the now morally bankrupt cop discovers that he's in the light of the problem he's been monitoring.

In truth, it's probably *Linklater's* a far, far rather the directness of Dick's head-splitting years. His film cuts corners to an extent by, indicating important plot points to readers in the story, but this ultimately helps to condense the narrative into two hours of screen time. In contrast, Kaufman's *A Scanner* scene has increasingly concerned with narrative resolution, with a lot on five levels barely on *Arctor's* number line. Kaufman has more used 2000's *Adaptation* to explore his problem with putting other women work. It is highly tempting to read into the film what he's that appears in this story. *Donald Kaufman's* *The Three*—a thriller that uses a plot perspective to drive change himself. While it would probably be a mistake to see that plot in a direct reference to *A Scanner Darkly*, Kaufman's growing success may distance him from the burden of future adaptations. *Nolan Kelly*

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